

THE GUARDIAN

A Literary Monthly Published in Philadelphia

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THE GUARDIAN

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ANDRÉ DÉRAIN — Clive Bell writes in "*Since Cézanne*", — is now the greatest power amongst young French painters . . . Derain stands for what is to-day most vital and valid in France — a passionate love of the great tradition, a longing for order and the will to win it, and . . . "high seriousness."

ISAAC GOLDBERG was editor of *The Stratford Journal* and is an important authority on Spanish, Portuguese and Latin-American literatures. He is also well-known as a translator of the literatures of many countries. At present he is engaged upon two studies: of H. L. Mencken and Havelock Ellis.

LAURA RIDING GOTTSCHALK won the Nashville Poetry Prize in a national poetry contest under the auspices of *The Fugitive*. She has since joined the *Fugitive* group. Her work, verse and prose, has appeared regularly in numerous periodicals.

ROBERT MCALMON is associated with the Contact Publishing Company in Paris, publishers of the more esoteric and experimental works. He has recently published "*Village*," a novel, and is at work upon another, from which his contribution to this issue is an extract. Mr. McAlmon has published also several volumes of poetry.

LOUIS RIBAK is a young New York artist who has exhibited at the Whitney Studio Club, with the Independents, and at the Anderson Galleries. (The drawing in this issue was made by scratching a needle on a film plate.)

DOMENICO VITTORINI is Assistant Professor of Italian at the University of Pennsylvania.

HERMANN J. WEIGAND, of the department of Germanics of the University of Pennsylvania, has just completed a study of Ibsen which will be published soon by Henry Holt and Co. His "*Hedda Gabler*" in this issue is a chapter of that book. Dr. Weigand has contributed to many journals of philology.

ROBERT L. WOLF is the author of "*After Disillusion*," a volume of poetry.

As announced in the previous number, THE GUARDIAN, is doubling up for the summer months. This Number II of Volume II is issued for July and August.

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MEYER EMIL MAURER, *Circulation Manager*

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THE GUARDIAN

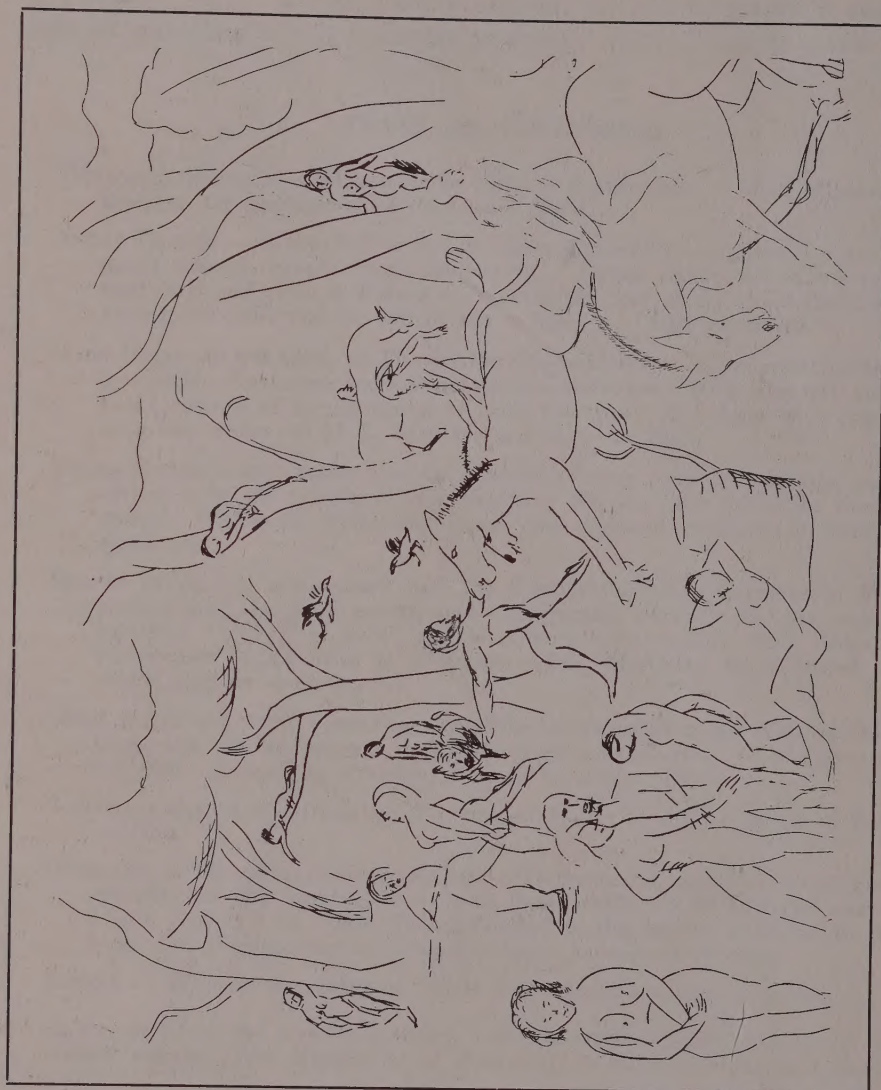
FRIDAY, 12th JANUARY 1900

THE GUARDIAN has been a constant presence in the life of the nation since its foundation in 1821. It has been a witness to the great events of our history, and has been a voice for the people in the most important moments of our life. It has been a source of information and a guide to the public mind, and has been a power for good in the world.

At the present time, the country is in a state of great excitement and agitation. The people are full of hope and confidence, and are determined to secure the rights of the future. The Government is doing its best to meet the demands of the people, and is working for the good of the nation. The people are united in their purpose, and are determined to achieve their ends.

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DRAWING

LOUIS RIBAK

The GUARDIAN

AUGUST 1925.

AMY LOWELL: A REMINISCENCE

BY JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

The first time that I met Amy Lowell was in June 1913 in her rooms on the top floor of the Berkeley Hotel in Piccadilly. At that time I knew Ezra Pound quite well — he was practically my sole American friend in London. Having occasion to call upon him at his lodging, a single room in a sunless court behind a dismal church in Kensington, I was asked by him to come and see a new and interesting arrival from America; wealthy I gathered, and a poet. The meeting was to be at eight or nine in the evening.

At that time Miss Lowell had written one book — *A Dome of Many-Colored Glass*. What interested me in the prospect of meeting her was not the fact that she had written poetry, but another fact that Pound conveyed, that she was interested in modern French poetry. I had "discovered" Verhaeren for myself two years before, and had followed him up by a prolonged bout of reading at others: Henri de Regnier, Jean Moreas, Albert Samain, Francis Jammes, Guy Charles Cros, were some of those I had absorbed. As for Baudelaire, Verlaine, Gautier, they were familiar ground. I had even heard of Rimbaud, Lautreamont, Mallarme and Laforgue.

But I discovered that Miss Lowell had read others whom I had never even attempted. She was familiar with Leconte de Lisle for example, whom I have always, unjustly perhaps, neglected. She also knew Heredia far better than I. Huysmans' novels, which to this day are almost terra incognita to me, were to her familiar ground.

At our first meeting, I did not say much. Miss Lowell somewhat intimidated me. Pound did most of the talking, and I recall that he likewise read one of his poems; the translation from the Anglo-Saxon poem of the "Seafarer." We parted at midnight, but not before I had been asked to come and read some of my own poems — which I did, a few nights later. Those which I read

were published later in my "Irradiations."

From that time up to 1917, my friendship with Miss Lowell remained unbroken. It was during that time that the three Imagist Anthologies, which were published on her initiative, came out. It was also during that time that she published "Sword-Blades and Poppy-Seed," "Men, Women and Ghosts," and her book on "The French Poets of To-day." For a good part of the time I lived near her in Boston. Our meetings and letters were fairly frequent. As long as I live I shall not forget those years. What united us was a common passion for literature, an interest in experiment for its own sake, a desire to see America take its place as a great art-producing nation.

It is not my object, nor, indeed, could I own to the presumption of attempting to value her poetry. That is a question which only time and others can settle. I am still too near to it, though she is dead, and I am writing three thousand miles away. For, though she was older, she belonged to the same mental generation as I and had fought largely the same battles. It is my business simply to show what her character and circumstances actually were; to give a clear picture of her position, and to leave her there. Let other critics concern themselves with her works.

Amy Lowell was a product of Boston blue-blooded society, which had prided itself, at the time of the Civil War, on being the intellectual aristocracy of America. Under the onrush of immigration later this society had moved from Beacon Hill to Back Bay, from Back Bay to Brookline. It had declined in numbers, and is still declining. During the time I knew Miss Lowell, I occasionally heard her refer to her nephews, of whom she was extremely fond. The last of these died on board a troopship returning home shortly after the Armistice. Industrialism, and the war "to make the world safe for democracy," had wreaked sad havoc with her family, which through intermarriage with the Putnams, could trace a clear line of descent from pre-revolutionary days.

The old New England stock, finding itself cramped in, had, after the Civil War, sent two of its most brilliant members to London to undertake the intellectual conquest of Europe. Whistler and Henry James had arrived when England and France still possessed a settled aristocratic society. After 1870, the last remnant of the French aristocracy vanished, and the captains of industry began usurping the forefront of the stage. In England, the transformation

took place about 1916. The fall of the Asquith government at the end of that year, was in reality the deathblow of Old England.

Whistler and Henry James had both fitted in so well with the social conditions of their day, that they lost all desire to return to the native soil. Both are now ranked as glories of the British school. Whistler hangs in the National Gallery and James died a British subject. I was one shown — with immense awe on the part of the person who revealed them to me — the exact shelves in the British Museum wherein the works of Henry James repose.

The generation that followed, the generation that grew to maturity in the nineties, if they came to Europe at all, did not stay. They came as tourists. Stephen Crane was about the only exception. But Crane was, as Heine said of Berlioz, always original. He was born too early and it is doubtful if many Americans, even at this day, have matched his mature art.

Miss Lowell visited Egypt, Constantinople, Italy and London in the nineties. She had met Whistler and had bought from him a small sketch. He had struck her as possessing exquisite manners. Her travels in those days, I gathered, were more than usually charpered and sheltered — she had not been born in the New England aristocracy for nothing! It was not till she was thirty that her opportunity for escape came. Yet she did not, at first, take full advantage of that opportunity. Her first book took ten years to write. And during that time she did not visit Europe. Only when her book was out, did she come over, in the midst of a London swept by Reinhardt and the Russian Ballet, a city where the Georgian poets had just been launched for their first venture, a city that had published Robert Frost and was still unable to make up its mind over Ezra Pound: a city that still — I suppose it is the effect of youth—seems far more interesting to me than the London of to-day.

It was in that year, I believe, that Miss Lowell purchased the great body of the unrivalled Keats collection. Her passion for Keats had developed, as most of our passions develop, in her girlhood. She had read and studied in her early years, Leigh Hunt's "Imagination and Fancy" and this book, which broke lances for the Elizabethans and for what the established critics, in Keats' day, called "The Cockney School," had greatly influenced her. She was as ardent an admirer of Keats, in her early years, as I had been of Shelley. It was, and to this day remains, the most fundamental difference between us. Except for "Adonais," I do not think she

had read or deeply cared for Shelley.

But even more fundamental than this, was the difference that temperamentally divided us. Miss Lowell was most ardently a propagandist. She was never so much at home as when she was standing upon some public platform. I disliked lecturing and reading and have only been able to conquer my dislike by an effort. My ideal of life has been a life of retirement, of contemplation, an unmethodical cloister for literary monks, a cell in the eternal hive of intellect. I enjoy conversation, but not publicity, aloofness rather than limelight. My travels have been undertaken out of a spirit of restless vagabondage; Miss Lowell travelled because her travels were in a sense, part of the programme which she laid down for herself.

Every creative artist, and I strongly suspect, every critic, in writing responds to some profound necessity of his or her temperament. Miss Lowell's temperament was strongly objective, and her championship of externality and even impersonality in poetry, is well known. She was definitely unmetaphysical, robustly practical in her outlook; she sought for facts, not causes. Nor was she in reality capable of enjoying the mystic experience which is so fleeting, yet so satisfactory — her world was a world of immediate sensation, of surface contact. For this reason she excelled in descriptive and narrative work, and not in lyric, or in the expression of emotional or metaphysical subtlety. Her recurring and underlying attitude to life was that of a stoic — as is common with New Englanders — but her stoicism did not diminish her enormous curiosity for fact. Had she been otherwise placed, she might have easily become a teacher, or a publicist.

Her real function, which she packed into the last twelve years of her life, was to provoke discussion, to uphold the new because of its novelty, to make America more sensitive to the world of form, color and material which Europeans take perhaps too much for granted. She had the vigor of an apostle and the directness of a pioneer. She represented the last stage of America's cultural and intellectual adolescence; and her yearning like the yearning of all adolescent cultures, was towards an older, longer established inheritance. She lived to make America aware of its European background, and she died at the summit of her achievement. The type she represented may have many successors, but they will be scholars and teachers, rather than poets. Her death marks the close of an epoch in America's conquest of its cultural inheritance.

HEDDA GABLER

BY HERMANN J. WEIGAND

The strangest thing about this coldest, most impersonal of Ibsen's plays is the fact that it was written the year after he had experienced the happiest, the most beautiful summer of his whole life.¹⁾ Nor had anything occurred to poison his memories.

The story of the September at Gossensass, where Ibsen, then in his sixty-second year, met a Viennese girl of eighteen, Emilie Bardach, and for once lost the frigid reserve that had long since become second nature to him, needs properly to be linked with *The Master-Builder* — that intensely personal confession of the artist at the threshold of old age who hears youth knocking at the gate. But that experience has left its stamp on *Hedda Gabler* as well.

There is a keen pathos about that short-lived summery warmth irradiating Ibsen's heart before the chill of winter set in. The notes and letters which Ibsen penned to this girl between October 1889 and February 1890, and at long intervals thereafter,²⁾ are aquiver with emotion, for all their formal reserve. The intensity of the upheaval was unprecedented in Ibsen's life. For a quarter of a century, at any rate, his outward life had been an uninterrupted record of single-minded absorption in his art. Now, for once, life asserted itself, not only independent from his art, but hostile to it. Returning to Munich, he finds himself unable to work. Try as he will to concentrate his imagination upon a new dramatic poem, it will not be controlled. Ever and again it slips its leash and steals back to the mountain valley to dwell on memories.

In the long run this state was bound to become insupportable to a mind that could not exist without being creatively active. Deprived of her personal presence, he could not endure the substitute of mere letters. In February Ibsen took the first step to recover his mastery of himself, by terminating the correspondence. It was a matter of conscience to him, as he phrased it, to put an end to the exchange of letters. She respected his wish.

In the course of that year Ibsen wrote *Hedda Gabler*. He wrote

1) Letter to Emilie Bardach, March 13, 1898.

2) These letters are found in Georg Brandes' monograph on Ibsen: *Die Literatur*, vol. 32. Berlin, Bard Marquardt und Cie.

it with a coldness, a detachment, an objectivity found neither before nor after in his writings. He refrained from intertwining with it any of the typical problems with which he never ceased to wrestle. He wrote it, I feel bold to assert, as an exercise in self-discipline, with a grim determination to focus his mind upon a situation as remote as possible from anything tinged with the warmth of personal experience. In doing so, he resorted, for an artist, to an unprecedented method for regaining his self-control. But is that incredible for an artist who set precedents rather than followed them?

A comparison of the preliminary drafts with the finished version gives the impression as of a distinct effort on Ibsen's part, in the elaboration of his theme, to steel himself against sentiment. The Hedda of the final version is much colder than the character originally projected. The original Hedda is characterized as "the pale, apparently cold beauty."¹) Like the later Hedda she is subject to irrepressible outbursts of malice, but she also confesses to getting pleasure out of suffering torments of remorse in consequence.²) Where the Hedda of our play, when love is mentioned, begs Brack to refrain from using that sticky word, and sharply denies the presence of any such sentiment in her comradeship with Løvborg, the earlier Hedda answers Løvborg's query by asking: "Do you believe that anything so wonderful exists?"³) The same chilling tendency is to be noticed with regard to some of the other characters, who are thereby vastly the gainers in subtlety. The occasional grossness of Judge Brack has yielded to a polished smoothness which no longer aesthetically offends. Tesman himself has undergone the most interesting transformation. Conceived originally as "homely in appearance, but honorable, and a gifted, liberal-minded man of science,"⁴) he was next turned into an obvious accomplice of Hedda's in the destruction of Løvborg's manuscript;⁵) whereas in the finished play his complicity in that deed — mental rather than physical — is so subtly indicated and so deftly concealed that the insincerity lurking under his naive and comical guise eludes all but the keenest scrutiny.

The objectivity of treatment in *Hedda Gabler* is such that to call the play a tragedy or a comedy falls equally wide of the mark. Tragedy presupposes the dominance of sympathy, comedy the dominance of a mood of elation, if not laughter. We experience neither

1) From Ibsen's Workshop, 381. 2) Ib. 403 3) Ib. 416. 4) Ib. 381. 5) Ib. 430.

in sufficiently strong measure to count. In place of sympathy we feel cold curiosity; for laughter we feel contempt. Nor is there the blending of strong emotions that makes tragi-comedy. *Hedda Gabler* is simply a spectacle of life from which we retire with a shock.

The technical organization of the play is so lucid as to require little comment. The conflict is clearly delineated from the outset, and the grouping of the characters around Hedda, as the central figure, is readily perceived. The situation which forms the basis for the catastrophe is the maladjustment between Hedda and her environment; it is complicated by the unresolved dissonances of Hedda's own nature. By the end of Act I the tension resulting from this maladjustment is exposed from a great variety of angles. The repugnance of the aristocratically reared girl for the petty bourgeois family with which she has become affiliated thru marriage; her contemptuous dislike of her husband; her shudder at the thought of approaching motherhood; the toning down of her social expectations, owing to the dubious financial outlook:—all this warns of the approach of a crisis.

Hedda Gabler is thus what is called a drama of ripe condition. It is not analytical, however, in the sense of *Ghosts* or *Rosmersholm*. Whereas in those dramas the crisis is pre-formed in the past, and the exposure of events antedating the dramatic action automatically precipitates the catastrophe, we have nothing of the sort here. In this play the ground is merely prepared by the past for an eventual crisis; the form which this crisis takes, however, and the moment of its appearance are conditioned by the spontaneous actions of Hedda in the space of time occupied by the drama. In *Hedda Gabler* we witness no "revelations" that by the act of their exposure exert pressure upon the shaping of the future as does, for instance, Ellida Wangel's confession to her husband. The exposure of Hedda's and Løvborg's past intimacy presents no analogy to Ellida's situation, since it is only to the reader and not to the participating characters that new facts are thereby brought to light.

What gives this method, however, the stamp of Ibsen's personal genius, is the degree of concentration with which the crisis is brought to a head and followed by the catastrophe. *Hedda Gabler* is the sort of theme which Hauptmann would have developed in a series of intervals extending perhaps over a year's time, like his "Coachman Henschel" or "Rose Bernd." Ibsen completes the cycle

of the action in thirty-six hours' time, without a change of setting. For all the extreme naturalism of his psychology, Ibsen resorts without stint to a degree of foreshortening that cuts down the intervals between succeeding stages of development to an almost irreducible minimum.

Hedda Gabler is the last of Ibsen's plays to have the dramatic interest centered on a complex woman character. The heroine, as usual, requires the closest kind of study. Her nature, shallow though it is, contrives to harbor so many contradictions that it is no easy matter to form a balanced view of her personality. Abject slavery to convention, coupled with an acute sense of personal freedom; cowardice and courage; crass materialism alongside of a pathetic idealism; candor and dissimulation — these and other traits are interwoven into the strange pattern of her character. Critics who have missed the vocation of pulpit orator love to inflate their lungs before pronouncing anathema over this demon in human form. Those of another breed would make of Hedda a victim of society.

Of Hedda's development we are given sparse glimpses. Of aristocratic birth and traditions, the daughter of General Gabler, Hedda grew up motherless. At the finishing school the presence of a girl with a head of abundant, wavy flaxen hair irritated her and provoked her to outbursts of cruelty which had their source in equal measure, perhaps, in envy and in a deep-seated temperamental antipathy; for dearth of abundance, physically and temperamentally, is a characteristic of Hedda's nature. Her later life also we have only in outline sketch. She was a popular ball-room belle, and the horsemanship of the proud beauty in her black habit and feathered hat attracted admiring attention. The only foreign element in her life of sport and social engagements was her clandestine intimacy with the brilliant and dissolute Eilert Løvborg, and this was terminated abruptly when it threatened to grow beyond the confines of conversations.

The old General died, leaving her impecunious. Hedda began to look around for a suitable match. The realization that her youth was slipping by made her uneasy. She had danced herself tired, her day was up — she tells Brack with a candor repented of as soon as uttered. Among the suitors who showed serious intentions the most acceptable seemed Jørgen Tesman, and she chose him.

The six weary months of their wedding trip more than sufficed to make Hedda realize the colossal mistake of her choice.

She had entered into the match without any feeling, expecting as a matter of course to find Tesman tolerable. Instead, she found him not only boring but disgustingly ridiculous. Herself a creature of perfect aristocratic breeding, everything about him offended her aesthetic sensibilities. His language with its idiotic "think-of-it's" and "fancy-that's," his constant betrayal of a childish naivete, his tactless personal attentions to her, suggesting the finesse of a bull pup, his stout perspiring figure, his very name, Jørgen—everything about him was plebeian and vulgar. Then to come home at last only to be reminded that she was now one of the family; to have to put up with the effusive sentimentality and middle-class manners of his maiden aunt and be expected to accomodate herself to her level; to be pestered with the unaesthetic discussion of financial worries! And the crowning misery of it all, to feel life of Tesman's life stirring in her womb!

Until the afternoon of her first day at home she had at least cherished the illusion that she was the only one to detect the comical quality of Tesman's personality, but Brack disabused her of that idea soon enough.

For a nature like Hedda's the possibilities of realizing happiness in life were very limited. Could she have married a man of wealth and influence and of a personality that did not offend her aesthetic sensibilities, she might have gone thru life without ever becoming aware that she had missed anything. As mistress of a salon, surrounded by admirers, the expression of the social talents which she undoubtedly possessed would have been given free play. She would not have had time to be bored; the craving for the power to mould a human destiny might have been diverted into the innocuous channels of petty intrigue. But with that one avenue to happiness closed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive for Hedda a life that would not have exposed the dearth of substance and the absolute poverty of her nature.

For in the last instance the cause of her deadly boredom lay in herself. Hedda was self-centered to a degree that absolutely excluded any vigorously stimulating contact with life in any form. It would be conceivable that a person so self-centered as Hedda should be at the same time self-sufficient. That, however, would presuppose an unusually resourceful personality. Now, what characterizes Hedda more than anything else is a complete dearth of inner resources. Hers is a barren nature on which no seed has been

able to thrive. The rudiments of sympathetic imagination, on which the expansion of personality depends, must have become atrophied long before she reached maturity. Her interests are of the very narrowest. Ideas in any form are distasteful to her. To Løevborg's intellectual side she is as coldly indifferent as to Tesman's special problems of research. To her a book is a book, regardless of contents, and boring as such. Her complete lack of imagination is instanced by the naive question: "Can such a thing not be reproduced? Written over again?" Even the range of her practical interests is pitifully constricted. Not only that she has no taste for responsibilities of any kind and for motherhood particularly, but she responds negatively to anything that reaches beyond the confines of the little sphere in which she has been accustomed to move. In revealing the boredom of her wedding trip to Brack, she lays particular stress on the fact that she had to go for six whole months without meeting a soul that knew anything of her circle or could talk about the things they were interested in. Her provinciality suggests the habits of the house-cat. To judge by all signs, including her relation to Løevborg, even her sex life had never been developed beyond the point where desire finds satisfaction in conversation.

Without taking into account Hedda's complete self-centeredness, the atrophy in her of sympathetic imagination and the impoverishment of her inner life, it would be impossible to understand her marriage to Tesman. In taking the step she was completely blind as to what it involved. On a shopping tour she would have exercised more judgment in selecting the merest trifle than she did in the acquisition of a husband. Upon superficial view Tesman seemed to conform tolerably, in the absence of an assorted stock to choose from, to the standard requirements of a husband for a woman of her class. The set in which he was accepted vouched for his being "a good fellow." He had some means of his own. His ability in his field of research was well thought of by the authorities, and the award of the traveling scholarship gave him prestige and indicated good prospects of rapid professional advancement. Hedda accepted the current estimate of him, and secretly she dreamed about his some day becoming a minister of state and of herself keeping open house on a large scale. What Hedda sought was a conventionally presentable husband; his individuality did not interest her in the slightest degree, she never gave it a thought of her own. The interests and the activities of men generally, except for the

ball-room, were a closed world to her. Of the world at large she was as ignorant as a child, and far more indifferent. Without doubt their courtship was an entirely formal affair. Of Tesman's intimate self, when he felt at his ease, Hedda probably got the first glimpse the morning after the wedding.

No single relationship illuminates so many sides of Hedda's nature as her clandestine comradeship with Løvborg. The hardness, the incapacity for sympathetic expansion, the self-centeredness of her nature comes out in the glimpses that we get of this chapter of her past, and it reveals in addition her conventionality, her cowardice and a curious, unsubstantial idealism, manifested in a thin, pseudo-classic cult of beauty.

Hedda did not love Løvborg. She would have loved him, had she been capable of either sympathy or genuine passion. As it was, the immediate basis of their comradeship was her curiosity about the forbidden side of life. Her veiled questions, prompted by a desire for thrills, but mistaken for sympathy by Løvborg, were designed to draw him out on the subject of his nightly dissipations, and in this she succeeded. Hedda's sensuality was attenuated to the point where suggestive images, conjured up by words, replaced physical passion and afforded a vicarious gratification. But with this prurient curiosity was blended a higher motive for their comradeship — the highest that her impoverished nature was capable of. Physically cold and incapable of love as she was, Hedda nevertheless idealized Løvborg. Because she was a cowardly slave to convention herself, she admired his courage in flying in the face of convention, in living his life to suit himself. She idealized his life of dissipation. It seemed a grand and bold and beautiful thing to her. She pictured him at the bacchanal with vine leaves in his hair; and that image, gleaned from some book about classical antiquity which she may have read in her school days, became to her, in the absence of a richer background, the sole symbol of a beautiful life of free abandon. Years later, when she tampers with his life, she clings with pathetic tenacity, as long as she can, to this last bit of wreckage of her one ideal.

Hedda suffers from the incongruity between her cowardly conventionality and her idealization of reckless abandon. She attempts to unite these two irreconcilable opposites in her own self by persuading herself that there is something courageous in her clandestine comradeship with the dissolute genius.

On superficial view, Hedda's low-voiced conversation with Lœvborg in the second act may seem to contradict my assertion of her coldness. When there was danger of their friendship developing into something more serious, Hedda threatened Lœvborg with her pistol and broke with him. But, as she confesses now, the fact that she did not dare to shoot him was not her worst act of cowardice that evening. More cowardly, as the context compels us to infer, was her refusal to yield to his passion. The contradiction, however, is more apparent than real. Her longing for the courage to do the unconventional thing and plunge into the life of dissipation is quite intelligible even in the absence of physical passion. Had she yielded to him, her gratification would have consisted in the consciousness of doing something wickedly unconventional, hence beautiful. Hedda's relation to Brack also substantiates her physical coldness. She knows perfectly well what sort of triangle the Judge has set his heart upon, hence there lies for her a peculiarly racy zest in the thought of manoeuvring the situation so dexterously as to keep it within the limits of Platonic voice.

It is difficult to keep free of the idea that there should not have been an element of genuine sympathy — of imaginative projection into his point of view — in Hedda's relation to Lœvborg. As one keeps in mind the fact, furtively revealed in momentary glimpses, that Lœvborg was the one individual who stood to Hedda for an ideal, one is tempted to attribute her challenge of his manhood, by sending him to Brack's stag party, in some measure to sympathy. It looks as if she had done it in part for his sake, to cleanse him of a stain that sullied his life. For her feeling there is something unaesthetic about the reclaimed rake, the total abstainer. He is no longer a free man. So it looks as tho an essentially unselfish desire to restore his freedom to him were blended with her other motives in sending him to the banquet. One needs become disabused of that idea, however, by her reaction to Brack's preliminary report of his suicide. "At last a deed worth doing," she exclaims in a clear tone of voice, and when Tesman and Thea have retired to the other room she reiterates the same idea:

HEDDA (*In a low voice*) — Oh, what liberation there is in this act of Eilert Lœvborg's.

BRACK—Liberation, Mrs. Hedda? Yes, for him it is liberation true enough.

HEDDA—I mean for me. It gives me a sense of freedom to know that a deed of deliberate courage is still possible in this world,—a deed of spontaneous beauty.

There is no mistaking the meaning of these words, "I mean for me." They show with dazzling clearness that Lœvborg's life had significance for her only as a means to the accomplishment of wholly egoistical ends. In using him as a means for bolstering her ideal, and as nothing else, she shows that even in her relation to ideal values she was incapable of transcending the most narrowly possessive attitude. Having gotten from his life the one thrill it could give her—the sensation which she mistakes for an experience—she scraped the rest that did not personally concern her without the least touch of sentiment. In the same way she might have dashed a precious vase against a cliff, with a beautiful gesture of free abandon. Qualitatively, her feeling for the object would have been the same.

Our preliminary study of Hedda, based largely on anticipations, permits us now to pass the dramatic action in rapid review. The conflict leading to the catastrophe is in substance the contest of two women striving each to control the destiny of a man. Hedda's is the aggressive role, while Thea, lacking the wits to sense her opponent's wiles, is purely on the defensive, and Eilert's is the subordinate part of being the object of the contest. Three times the action rises to a peak, with Hedda scoring three successive triumphs over her rival: the first gained in the open, when Lœvborg goes to Brack's party despite Thea's pleading; the second, a clandestine victory, when Hedda burns the precious manuscript; the third, when Hedda exults in the news of Lœvborg's suicide. But each time her triumph is premature; time after time the fruit of her victories becomes vile and loathsome as she puts it to her mouth; so that at last, overcome with nausea and a sense of futility, she plays her final trump by making a spectacular and horrifying exit.

Hedda drifts into the conflict without plan or purpose. She fastens upon Thea to extract the intimacies of her life with something of the same avid curiosity with which she had listened to Lœvborg's confidences. She snatches at a sensation which promises for the time being to make her forget her desperate boredom, and her sporting appetite is whetted by the consideration that she is neatly decoying that same cow-eyed blonde on whom she had longed to take

out her malice in her school days. Jealousy and envy do not at first perceptibly enter into her reaction to Thea's disclosures. Her lips curl in contempt as she pictures that wild and wayward genius Løevborg "reclaimed" by the mute appeal of those languishing blue eyes which hide such a depth of — stupidity. It is Thea herself who unsuspectingly sets Hedda's thoughts upon active mischief by disclosing the fact that the shadow of another woman stands in the way of her happiness.

In arranging to have Thea and Løevborg meet at her house, Hedda is actuated by nothing more definite than the idea of amusing herself by a little cruel experimentation. The prospect of watching Løevborg's behavior under two fires and of seeing her rival completely snuffed out by her own superior magnetism, promises a piquant gratification. But she is not counting upon any serious agitation of her own emotions.

Already her preliminary *tete-a-tete* with Løevborg, however, in the second act, develops beyond the point of playful fencing. A moment before their sitting down with the album it had made Hedda wince to compare her self-confessed second-rater of a husband with the man she might have married. And now, the moment they are alone, Løevborg exposes the sore of her mis-marriage with a blunt sincerity made the more poignant by the uncontrolled ardor of his passion. He tells her that she has thrown herself away; he subjects her to cross-examination. His aggressive manner arouses her own deeper emotions. The desire to keep his passion in check, resentment over the fact that he should have detected the ridiculousness of her situation at a glance, blends now for the first time with a feeling of jealousy against her lucky rival. Løevborg has just told Hedda that she is a coward at heart, when she strikes back with the sarcastic remark that he has now found at the Elvsted's ample consolation for her having failed him. But if her sarcasm betrays jealousy, her quick change to softness a moment later does it even more. There is balm for the charge of cowardice in hearing him apply the epithet "stupid" to her rival:—

LOEVborg—I know what Thea has confided to you.

HEDDA—And perhaps you have confided to her something about us?

LOEVborg—Not a word. She is too stupid to understand anything of that sort.

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HEDDA—Stupid?

LOEVborg—She is stupid about matters of that sort.

HEDDA—And I am cowardly. (*Bends over towards him, without looking him in the face, and says more softly*) But now I will confide something to you.

LOEVborg—(*Eagerly*) Well?

HEDDA—The fact that I dared not shoot you down—

LOEVborg—Yes!

HEDDA—That was not my most arrant cowardice that evening.

But a moment later, when he would take advantage of her softness to return to the forbidden, "du" of familiar address, she again hardens to steel.

Then Thea arrives, and it takes Hedda but a glance to see that it is now not herself but her rival who dominates Lœvborg's attention. His frank admiration of Thea in her presence piques Hedda, and she vents her feeling by an ambiguous jest. Lœvborg feels the challenge and comes to Thea's defense in terms which contain a sharp thrust at Hedda. He stresses the genuineness of Thea's comradeship and of her courage where the comrade is concerned emphasizing by implication Hedda's own lack of both. Exasperated by Lœvborg's unexpected resistance to her magnetism, Hedda has now only the one idea of bringing him to his knees. Of his refusing to drink she makes an issue, by which she would test her power. But her arts of persuasion, her taunts and jibes, while ruffling his feelings, fail to budge him from his determined abstinence. Her attack already seems completely parried in every quarter, when she spies an unguarded spot and knifes him: By a remark, innocent sounding, but aimed with deadly precision, she destroys his main support, his trust in his comrade.

Hedda has triumphed in the first encounter. No longer heeding Thea's pleadings, Lœvborg drains both glasses, stops when Hedda bids him to, and falls in line with her desire that he attend the revel of Brack and his friends.

Three distinct motives contribute to Hedda's sudden change of plan in deciding to send Lœvborg to the party. What suggested it to her was the fact that she could thereby do Thea a nasty turn. Then she felt a thrill at the thought that for once in her life she was exercising the power to mould a human destiny. Lastly — a

reflection which grew in prominence after the men's departure—her act removed from him the stigma of being "reclaimed." By making a free man of him once more it spelt the victory of her personal ideal of free abandon.

When Hedda finds herself alone with Thea she wears no mask. Her exultation is frank and unrestrained. By sheer desire to accentuate her contrast to the trembling, broken Thea, she works herself into an almost frenzied state of confidence as to the outcome. "You may doubt him as long as you please; *I* believe in him," she says to Thea, as she stamps her vision of him — the reveller with vine-leaves in his hair, flushed and fearless—upon her rival's mind. There is no shaming about her enthusiasm any more than about her naively honest avowal: "I want for once in my life to have power to mould a human destiny." The wave of emotion takes its course, and arrived at its crest, she bursts into the hysterical confession: "Oh, if you could only understand how poor I am. And fate has made *you* so rich. (Clasps her passionately in her arms.) I think I must burn your hair off, after all."

In this magnificent climax, the conclusion of Act II, we come closer to feeling an elemental contact with Hedda's nature than at any other point of the drama. In her premature exultation, in her surrender to emotion, in her naive self-exposure, in her passionate craving for sympathy addressed to the very victim of her cruelty there is something infinitely pathetic. But this emotional climax is so sudden and so brief that the note of pity struggles in vain to break thru the attitude of cold detachment to which we have become habituated in observing her behavior. Nor does Hedda, moreover, soften to a like degree a second time.

The wan light of early morning finds the two women still together, Thea consumed with anxiety, Hedda fatigued and yawning, as she awakes from the few hours of sleep she had snatched after a fruitless vigil. The phrase about the vine-leaves, which Hedda repeats, sounds hollow and insincere now that it is not sustained by enthusiasm, and yet Hedda clings to it until forcibly robbed of her illusion.

Tesman is the first to return with his version of the rude reality. Hedda refuses at first to accept it. When Tesman speaks of Løvborg as irreclaimable, she retorts: "I suppose you mean that he has more courage than the rest?" And when he says that the feast turned into an orgy she asks: "Had he vine-leaves in his hair?"

Only when she hears of his long, rambling speech in honor of the woman who inspired him to his work, her illusions are silenced. So it was her rival his thoughts turned to even at the banquet!

And now Brack comes to complete Hedda's disillusionment, by his account of the sordid details of the soiree at Mademoiselle Diana's, — the general scrimmage between ladies and gentlemen, the interference of her police, and the marching of Lœvborg to the lock-up. "Then he had no vine-leaves in his hair," is Hedda's comment, as she gazes straight before her. Both her arms, it seems, the destruction of her rival and the vindication of her ideal of beauty, have miscarried.

But with Lœvborg's call Hedda's hopes arrive, and a new destructive idea is added to her aims. As Lœvborg declares to Thea that their ways must now part, that she can be of no more service to him, Hedda cannot repress the exultant out-cry: "I knew it!" — She has succeeded, after all, in destroying her rival.

And now Thea is fated for the second time to turn Hedda's thoughts into the channel of perverse destructiveness. The violence of the shock which Thea experiences upon hearing Lœvborg assert that he had made away with the manuscript opens Hedda's eyes to the value of the hostage she holds. It is not a mere book, it is their child, their common offspring, the fruit that will give permanence to their union, even tho their ways part hereafter. Thea has spoken a language that Hedda understands. The hated life stirring in her own womb brings it home to her all the more vividly that her attempts to nullify Thea's influence over Lœvborg are futile unless their common child is destroyed. From the moment that Hedda's mind fixes upon this thought, Lœvborg's work is doomed. As she feeds the manuscript bit by bit to the flames, after Lœvborg's departure, she experiences all the sensations of deliberate child-murder. In witnessing her gruesome act, in beholding the lurid glow of the fire upon her drawn features, in catching the sound of her low mutterings, we feel the same ghastly horror that would steal over us in childhood, as we pictured Althea, Meleager's unnatural mother, recommitting to the flames that magic brand with whose last flicker the spirit departed from the wasted form of her son.

But before she carries out her design to complete the annihilation of her rival, Hedda moves to insure at the same time the positive triumph of her own ideal. She hands Lœvborg the pistol which had once been pointed at him, and bids him redeem himself

by a death in beauty, freely chosen. Undaunted by the grotesque miscarriage of her inspiration the night before, she is borne aloft on a second wave of enthusiasm. For a second time her will is concentrated upon a single vision. Her craving for power is such that by sheer willing she succeeds in achieving the illusion of unlimited power. She cannot afford to have her confidence crossed by the least ripple of doubt lest failure result.

She fails nevertheless, as she had failed the first time, Brack's preliminary report of Lœvborg's death allows her to enjoy a short-lived triumph: she exults naively, unguardedly, scouting the most elementary precautions for concealing her hand in his fate. But when the truth comes out, that Lœvborg died not in beauty, not in freedom, but by an accidental shot that tore into his bowels, she turns sick with loathing and despair as she utters the words: "Oh, what curse is it that makes everything I touch turn ludicrous and mean?" And that curse continues to pursue her. Not only that her ideal has been grotesquely defiled and parodied in the circumstances of Lœvborg's death, — even her grandiose act of vengeance on Thea turns out to be ridiculously futile. That morning she had burned the "child," and before the day is up she must see her husband and Thea pore over a bundle of notes, to restore by a new act of inspiration and many months' labor what she believed herself to have permanently annihilated.

Hedda has lost all along the line. The legend of the one concentrated effort of her life is summed up in the word "futility." We feel that death would mean liberation for her. Yet the shock to our nerves of Hedda's suicide is so sudden that it makes us gasp. To account for Hedda's suicide there is such a cumulation of motives as can scarcely be grasped in a single act of intuition. There is her terror of the prospect of eking out a miserable existence of genteel poverty as the wife of the impossible Jørgen Tesman. There is her dread of motherhood. There is her sense of abject, crushing defeat manoeuvred by fate rather than by a rival too stupid to sense either the meeting of the struggle or her victory. There is her feeling of nausea on beholding the one ideal that she could call her own befouled by life and irreparably besmirched. There is her exhaustion, psychical and physical, after a supreme effort of will and a night and a day of acute nervous tension. Superadded to it all is her dismay upon finding herself at Brack's mercy as an alternative to becoming involved in scandal, and her revolt against be-

ing coerced into physical surrender to the sleek libertine as the price of his silence.

Death offered escape from all that was ugly and loathsome, but in addition, as shown by the manner of her death, the thought of suicide exercised a positive fascination as well. By dying in beauty, as she conceived it, she could vindicate her ideal and fling a final, unanswerable challenge at the world. Voluntary death, moreover, effaced the stigma of cowardice under which she had all her life smarted. Finally, the diabolical delight she experienced in anticipating how her deed would shock the survivors out of their wits, lent a positive zest to her act of self-annihilation.

Despite all these factors exerting pressure in the direction of suicide, the nervous shock we sustain from Hedda's deed is scarcely less than that of the half-fainting Brack, as instanced by his outcry: "God God! — people don't do such things." There is always an element of the miraculous in voluntary death; it is the greater if the impulse for the deed has ripened underground. Not that she should want to kill herself is what shocks us, but that she should have the nerve, without warning, to convert impulse into action. The real crux of the matter is that until she has actually fired the fatal shot we do not, in our hearts, believe her capable of committing such a deed. We have seen too much of her cowardice to reckon seriously with the idea that she should find the courage to put an end to her pitiful existence.

Yet, upon reflection, we can understand her singular act of courage as much as we can understand the rest of her actions. Her suicide finds analogies in her previous conduct. On two occasions we saw the bored and cynical expression of her eyes yield suddenly to a flaming animation that betokened an absolute concentration of her whole personality upon a single act of willing. In both cases that innervation, transforming her, was short-lived and spent itself in vain, but it betrayed for the moment the mettle of the heroine, albeit the quixotic heroine. In conceiving the impulse to suicide, her self is gathered up for the third time into a single concentrated current of will, and this time her will culminates in the action willed because for this once both the act of willing and its execution lie in her own hand.

Cold as Hedda leaves us, her self-chosen death, for all the quixotic idealism it betrays, strikes a finer note than we were prepared for. Her nature being what it was, warped beyond hope,

narrow and self-centered to the point of complete isolation, Hedda's exit is at any rate in keeping with the best that is in her. We don't regret her passing, but neither do we scoff over her corpse.

There are many readers of *Hedda Gabler* who will feel moved to intense compassion for poor Thea and rejoice on her account in the destruction of her cruel foe. They fail to perceive the cryptic irony which lurks underneath the objective portrayal of her personality. Circumstances conspire to show Thea in an undeservedly favorable light. The mere fact that she is the unsuspecting victim of deliberate malice is calculated to stampede our sympathies in her favor and blind our judgment as to the essential commonplaceness of her nature. By contrast to Hedda's wickedness Thea's stupidity appears in the light of a positive virtue; Hedda's cowardice and hatred of motherhood cast shadows that emphasize the illusion of Thea's courage and motherliness. Could we observe Thea in her normal surroundings, we should readily perceive that she has little but her appealing looks to trade on. Objectively regarded, Thea's impulsive decision to desert her husband and step-children, to compromise herself in such a way as to throw herself upon the mercy of Løvborg's sense of chivalry, is, at best, an ambiguous demonstration of unselfish devotion. Her approval, "I have done nothing but what I *had* to do," is subject to more than one interpretation. Her past life will not bear close examination. She had not gone blindfolded into her marriage, five years ago. For a considerable time previous she had been the governess of the Sheriff's children, she knew the responsibilities she was undertaking. Yet her single mention of the children is such as to give the impression that, with all her ostensible motherliness, she feels no particle of tenderness for the orphans whom she has supposedly been mothering during all those years.

Fortunately for Thea, these things remain buried in deep shadow, while full light falls upon her solicitude for her comrade. It is only in the last act, in contemplating the domestic idyll exposed to our view, that we become — almost insensibly — aware of a redistribution of lights and shadows. This same Thea, whose languishing eyes and mute, appealing glances had inspired Løvborg, already found a new comrade to console her for the loss of her former one. "Ah, if I could only inspire your husband in the same way!" she whispers to Hedda. As we watch Thea Elvsted and

Jørgen Tesman bending close together in their joint task, the feeling grows on us that Tesman is on the point of filling the gap left in Thea's emotional life by Lønborg's death. The ease with which Thea, in her ravenous hunger for affection, assimilates so common a product as Tesman when the flavor of Lønborg's rare spirit is still fresh on her lips, points to a lack of discrimination suggestive of a crude, voracious appetite.

As to the only other woman character who crosses Hedda's path in the drama, there can scarcely be any serious difference of opinion. Aunt Julie, the old maiden lady, is introduced as an element of the family *milieu* in which Hedda finds herself condemned to move as a result of her marriage. She has the typical virtues and the typical short-comings of a person of her class and her station in life. Her very genuine kindness knows no other form to take than that of overflowing sentimentality. Her strong family sense is reinforced by that rather smug brand of piety, familiarly met with among the lowly and humble, which attributes to a special solicitude of Providence the triumph of the Tesmans over the Lønborgs who would block the path of their material advancement. Without sharing her homely philosophy, we respect her for acting according to her best lights, but all in all she does not engage our sympathies to any vital extent.

The three men who figure in our play are characterized among other things by three distinct functional relationships in which they stand to Hedda, — Tesman being the material provider, Brack the entertainer and Lønborg the hero. Of the three, Lønborg is the most sketchily treated. Eilert Lønborg's obvious kinship with Ulrik Brendel has often been remarked upon. Like the erratic gentleman-tramp of *Rosmersholm* Lønborg has that strong personal vanity which loves the flashy phrase and the theatrical gesture. The disdainful way in which he speaks of his recent, widely discussed publication as not worth the bother of Tesman's reading, is a choice bit of posing. His claim that he deliberately put nothing into the book save what everybody would agree to, in order to pave the way for his personal message, is only his exaggerated way of saying that he has already out-grown the view-point he held when he wrote it. The question as to the genuineness of his genius I regard as idle. We shall never know whether he was one of these rare original minds who fructify the thought of a whole age, or simply one of those flashing meteors that arrest attention because of the brilliancy of

their fireworks. Neither his lack of self-control nor his ability to be inspired by the empty-headed Thea decides the case one way or another. It is one of life's ironies that Nature can avail herself of the most brainless woman, provided she can muster the rapt gaze of the intelligent listener, to draw out the finest manifestations of masculine genius. Even as to the subject of the manuscript that perished — the future of the human race — the indications may be read either way. We know how Ibsen's thought converged upon the future; we know with what prophet's ardor he read the signs of the times as heralding the dawn of a new era about to revolutionize our present categories of thinking; and we know also how skeptical he was as to any attempt to define the vital forces of the future in all but the vaguest outline.

Judge Brack recalls to mind another of the characters of *Rosmersholm*, in one important particular. Like Rector Kroll he has a special talent for doing stealthy detective work, but in place of the Rector's brusqueness he has the suave polish of the perfect gentleman. From the outset Brack's eyebrows are cocked in apprehension because of Lœvborg's reappearance upon the scene; and when his keen scent warns him that there is danger of Lœvborg's breaking into the exclusive triangle and encroaching upon his private preserves, he moves swiftly and smoothly to effect his rival's ruin. So smooth are his operations, in fact, that were it not for the report which he gives Hedda as to the wind-up of his party, showing as it does how keenly he was on the alert as to every move of his rival's, Brack could scarcely be suspected of having contributed by deliberate intrigue to Lœvborg's downfall. However, with Brack's sinister intentions established beyond doubt, it is evident that chance simply accelerated the result which he would have striven with all the means at his command to attain sooner or later. Chance played into his hands when Lœvborg's acceptance of Hedda's challenge caused him to accept the invitation to Brack's stag party; it did so a second time when Lœvborg lost his precious manuscript. Under the guise of acting the cordial host Brack had merely to see to Lœvborg's getting thoroly drunk; that accomplished, he could bank with confidence on the persuasions and the example of Lœvborg's fellow-revellers doing the rest to make him conclude the orgy at the apartments of Mademoiselle Diana. As his subsequent remarks on the impossibility of Lœvborg's being admitted henceforth to a single respectable house clearly show, Brack could congratulate him-

self on having eliminated, in irreproachable gentleman fashion, a most dangerous rival.

Even at the last, in the act of clinching his victory and establishing the triangle on a solid basis, Brack maintains the suavity of the perfect gentleman. Anxious as he is to find out by what means Løvborg got possession of the pistol, he displays a remarkable combination of delicacy and shrewdness in preventing Hedda, who has already betrayed herself sufficiently by her manner, from avowing the truth in so many words. His very solicitude for shielding her reputation is the most effective means of impressing upon her the gravity of her predicament. His knowledge of Hedda's secret puts her spotless name at his mercy; but while leaving no ambiguity as to the fact that he has her in his power, he keeps up an appearance of chivalry, by pointing out to her that even if he should not keep silence as to the ownership of the pistol she could clear herself by pretending that it had been stolen. In presenting this theoretical alternative he counts, for its rejection, upon Hedda's realizing the fact that even this subterfuge would not spare her the humiliation of seeing her name linked in the public press with that of the red-haired singer. The more subtle consideration, that Hedda would abhor even a technical charge of theft as a further defilement of Løvborg's memory, presupposes an intuitive projection into Hedda's manner of thinking which we can scarcely credit him with possessing.

The portrait of Brack is executed with a vividness that makes it one of the unforgettable pieces in Ibsen's gallery of characters. An even more distinctive position, however, is reserved for Tesman. In Tesman Ibsen has handled a thoroly commonplace character with a degree of finesse which he rarely, if ever, equalled. I know of no single situation that illustrates Ibsen's peculiar genius more strikingly than Tesman's relation to Løvborg. An uncanny penetration into the secret springs of conduct combines here with an objectivity of rendering calculated to conceal rather than reveal the author's esoteric knowledge of Tesman's character. To my knowledge, the equivocal nature of Tesman's complete line of conduct, after his finding of the manuscript, has failed to arouse the suspicions of a single critic. In the nature of things, Tesman's brainless scholarship and his ludicrous naivete have drawn the caustic sarcasm of all commentators; but many — and not the meanest of them — have stressed his large-hearted kindness and simple honesty as endowing

him with some genuine human value in contrast to Hedda's corrosive perversity. The findings of our analysis will be seen to differ sharply from those commonly accepted.

Tesman is keenly aware of the fact that he is intellectually Løvborg's inferior. When Brack advances the theory that his appointment to the professorship may be made contingent upon the outcome of a competition with Løvborg, he is thoroly alarmed. Indignant gesticulation at the very idea is his first reaction to the news. For Løvborg to challenge his right to the position would be showing the most incredible lack of consideration toward him, a married man, who had run deeply into debt on the strength of mere prospects. On finding himself alone with Hedda he betrays his discouragement. "It was adventurous to go and marry and set up house upon mere expectations," he tells her. Eager as he is to snatch the merest straw of comfort, he finds balm in the reassuring words of Aunt Julie. And when the tension finally breaks, when Løvborg tells him in language which does not disguise his contempt, that he has no intentions of standing in the way of Tesman's appointment, Tesman is so little master of his feelings that he draws Brack's and Hedda's ironical comment.

However, even a fool like Tesman cannot be insensitive to the humiliation which a victory of Løvborg's in the open forum would entail for him. It is natural that his consciousness of being the weaker should make him secretly hope for some eventuality to arise to thwart his rival's success.

His stocks rise in consequence of the developments at Brack's party.

For one thing, he finds consolation in the reflection that if Løvborg outdistances him in brilliancy of intellect, he more than neutralizes this deficiency by the sinking example he sets Løvborg in the matter of decent behavior. The satisfaction he experiences in contrasting his own socially accredited virtue with Løvborg's lack of self-control is so great that he can weep crocodile tears of regret over Løvborg's incorrigible weakness. More than that, he feels his own moral superiority so securely established that he can afford even to confess to a stirring of jealousy, as he listened to his rival's brilliant essay.

Of even greater psychological importance is the fact of his find. From the outset his feelings with regard to the precious manuscript in his possession are quite complicated. At the root of his act of

concealing it is the instinctive, unavowed wish to deprive his rival of the material evidence of his superiority. However, Tesman's conscience will not permit that wish to come to the surface of his consciousness. He obscures it instantly with superficial motives which serve to explain his action on high moral grounds. In the state Løvborg was in, he persuades himself, he didn't dare return it to him at once. For Eilert's sake, in order to spare him a keen humiliation, he concealed his find from his companions, and he enjoins Hedda not to tell a soul about it.

Time is gained, at any rate, by procrastination; and generous motives easily suggest themselves to Tesman for justifying further delay. He wants to give "Eilert, poor fellow, time to have his sleep out," before he surrenders the book. All this time, as his words to Hedda betray, his mind is dwelling upon the fact that there is no second copy of the manuscript in existence.

The day passes, and evening arrives without Tesman having divulged his secret. In the afternoon he had looked in at Løvborg's rooms but failed to find him. Perhaps he counted on his being out, might well be the case, considering his presumptive state of mind on discovery of his loss. Certainly the fact that Tesman departed without leaving a note is an item of the gravest significance. Then he met Thea rushing about distractedly, but he clung to his secret. From Thea he gathered that Løvborg had called at the house that morning and talked incoherently about having torn the manuscript to pieces. Thea's own ignorance made it sufficiently plain that Hedda had followed to the letter his injunction to keep silence. When he nevertheless asks Hedda, "But of course you told him that we had it?" he is certain, in advance, of a negative answer.

"You ought to have told him," he tells Hedda. "Fancy, if, in desperation he should go and do himself some injury!" His reply is strictly in accord with the demands of his conscience. Yet the apparent concern of his phrasing only disguises the secret hope that such a contingency might already have occurred, and it absolves him in advance of any blame for what may have happened.

Now Tesman declares his resolve to take the manuscript to Løvborg at once. Precisely what he had in mind to do must remain mere conjecture. Perhaps he hoped that Hedda would dissuade him from acting in haste. Or there was always the possibility of Løvborg's not being at home. And again, he was possibly prepared to find Løvborg in such a state of distraction as to justify his de-

ciding that it would be dangerous to tell him of his find at once, even now. Be that as it may, his conscience at any rate required a gesture on Tesman's part for its temporary pacification. All that we can be certain about is that his conscience, while permitting him to drift passively into crime, was too active to allow his forming any deliberate, consciously avowed plan to suppress Lœvborg's work.

Conjecture as to what might have happened is checked by Hedda's announcement that she has burned the manuscript. The first shock is almost too much for Tesman. In mingled joy and terror he screams: "Burnt! Burnt Eilert's manuscript!" Then, as he collects himself, he formulates the significance of her act in language suggestive of Torvald Helmer: "Do you know what you have done, Hedda? It's unlawful appropriation of lost property."

Swayed by a mixture of fear of consequences and sarcastic deviltry, Hedda explains that she committed the deed for love of him, and to make sure of his dancing altogether to the tune of her pipe she gives him to understand that he is to become a father. The effect of this second revelation is marvelous. Tesman clasps his hands together. He shouts. He laughs in irrepressible glee. In his excitement he even gets off an excellent pun:

No, by-the-bye — that affair about the manuscript — of course nobody must know about that. But that you burn for me, Hedda, — Aunt Julie must really share my joy in that.¹⁾

Our insight into Tesman's complex state of mind makes us realize what a masterly flash of intuition on Ibsen's part prompted the timing of Hedda's announcement of her pregnancy at this juncture. The news that he is to be a father releases of a sudden all of Tesman's pent-up emotions. When Hedda announced the destruction of Lœvborg's work he longed to cry out with glee at the materialization of his secret wishes, but his conscience restrained him, except for his first equivocal shout; he had to persuade himself that he deplored the deed on Lœvborg's account. Now it is different. The second piece of news opens the flood-gates of his feelings, and in the tumult of his paternal joy the waters from the first source mingle undetected with the current that has just found its legitimate release. Now he can rejoice to his fill, and no voice of conscience dares to inhibit the spontaneity of his exultation!

1) An idiomatic Norwegian way of saying: "that you love me so ardently." — The pun of the original has to be sacrificed in putting it into good English.

Fate has been kind to Tesman. Without his having had to commit an act or utter a word that he need to ascribe to any save the most honorable and exalted motives, his rival's work has been destroyed. And Fate has still greater kindness in store for him. As Brack brings the news of Lœvborg's suicide, there is indeed a flutter of suspense; Tesman's conscience, aroused again, gives him a few uneasy moments; but the situation is saved and Tesman's peace of mind definitely assured, when Thea produces her bundle of notes — the jottings from which Lœvborg dictates his book. There is a task for Tesman! With his talent for arranging other people's work, he is the very man to restore the lost manuscript. How will his conscience dare to stir in the face of his resolve to dedicate his life to this task, to make his own researches wait upon the completion of this monument to Lœvborg's memory? Could friendship be more generous, could devotion be more self-sacrificing? Considering it from whatever angle one will — the appeasement of his conscience, the establishing of his scholar's reputation, the appraisal of his character as a man — it is certain that this piece of editing will be the keystone in the making of Tesman's career.

Rarely, if ever, has Ibsen handled a commonplace character with such a degree of subtlety. The extraordinary finesse displayed in the treatment accorded to Tesman lies precisely in the equivocal nature of every single phase of his conduct. For the reader to lump Tesman with Brack, as another cold-blooded, unscrupulous rascal, were to miss the point of our analysis. Far from being a clever villain, Tesman is every bit as honorable as the average run of commonplace people. He has a conscience as efficacious as that of the average run of people. It keeps aggressive wickedness from stalking in freedom; and for the rest it keeps the mind busy building up fictitious lines of motivation to serve as covers for the manifestation of impulses that are not recognized as respectable. Ironical sidelights fall, to be sure, on the texture of this average morality, revealing its fabric to consist so largely of fraud and make-believe as to throw its wearer almost wholly upon the mercy of fortuitous circumstance. When fate is kind enough, however, to prevent the frail tissue from being rent by any overt act, the Tesman type of conscience obligingly relapses into its normal state of quiescence. It shows no dispositions to develop into the malignant tumor, the destroyer of vital tissue, as which we behold another type of conscience in the tragedy of Master-Builder Solness.

THREE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

BY ROBERT J. COADY

NOTE:—The three letters below supplement in Coady's own words the statement of his program contributed by Mr. Gorham B. Munson to our March number. Some of the "kids' drawings" he mentioned were reproduced in the SOIL: the SOIL also carried a photograph of "Old John Smith," the ancient Indian described in the third letter. Some publisher, we venture to suggest, would perform a real service to American culture, were he to reprint in one volume the five issues of the SOIL, for copies of that publication are now unfortunately rare. The essential spirit of it is however contained in the letters we publish.

I.

WASHINGTON SQUARE GALLERY
47 Washington Square, N. Y.

Feb. 12, 1916

My dear Mrs. H—,

I'm so glad to hear that your enthusiasm for my kids' work has not waned and that your interest in modern art has not been affected by what "the other side" has to say. There are some people who refuse to believe that the earth is round because they can't measure it with a T square. There is no confusion where there is real knowledge. Art is not a secret and its mystery is the mystery of light. It can be seen and enjoyed *because* it can be seen. A canvas with paint on it is as much a fact as the frame that holds it. They will both respond beautifully to a treatment of logic—common sense. Unfortunately today we are suffering from an epidemic of "ismism." We have substituted isms for taste. And here's where the confusion sets in. Yet with all their isms they have not added a syllable to Plato.

Taste is really a matter of taste and not a matter of anything else. It has its fixed limitations and its fixed principles. It has never gone outside of the limits established by the masters except (if it be an exception) when a new master appears and extends its limits. All progress is a matter of proportional purification. The aim is the essence. All art justifies itself when it accomplishes that which cannot be accomplished in any other way. Metaphysics grew

out of psychology. Psychology grew out of physiology. Each became sciences in themselves performing functions that cannot be performed by any other science. Modern art has purified its mediums and the worst that can be said of it is that while the art has progressed we have not the great artists that lived in the past. But even in the past the artist was the rare being and it took Europe five hundred years to develop less than fifty painters. Today we are not living in an art epoch and when you've named Picasso, Gris and Rivera you've summed up the whole of modern art. There are a few others of promise, but they have not as yet arrived.

The rest of the art world is made up of weak, weaker and weakest imitations of the three first named and their imitators. In our own country, for instance, our academy is an imitation of the French Beaux Arts — a dying institution. Our technicians are reflections of the Paris Salon and our "new men" are the "ismists" who are more interested in theories than art. None of this is American. None of it has come from the soil. It is a sugarcoated importation and I have a profound respect for the business man who says "to hell with it" and refuses to be "converted." Yet where is the business man who would not shut up shop to see a ball game?

There is a big spirit here and we have a big future before us. We have no traditions to either help or hamper us and as a result our efforts are more creative. There is more art here outside of the "art world" than there is in it. The Indian, the Negro, and the various units of European and Oriental culture that flock to our shores constitute a fast forming culture. In fact, it is already sufficiently formed to have expressed itself in numerous ways and with expressions that rank with Europe's best periods. But these things are not called art. They have been relegated to other fields by our "critics," impresarios, dealers, etc. This brings me back to my kids' drawings. I regard them as the beginnings of American art. But more of this later if you wish. I don't want to bore you with my troubles. Your letter opened a vein and that's why you have suffered this long response.

I had better tell you about the book by Max Jacob, the price, etc., before ending it. I have one copy left. It is No. 23 of a limited edition of one hundred copies on specially prepared paper, illustrated with four original etchings by Picasso. Each number is signed by the author and artist. The price is twenty dollars.

Robert J. Coady

The GUARDIAN

II.

WASHINGTON SQUARE GALLERY
47 Washington Square, N. Y.

April 4th, 1916.

My dear Mrs. H——,

I've been waiting for a chance to sit down quietly and answer your letter but I've kept on the go so much for the past month. I've opened a branch in Washington, D. C., hired a new gallery at 489 5th Ave. and am starting a magazine! This, together with running this gallery and my kids' classes, my hands, head and feet have been worked overtime. Oh, for a 900 mile auto ride through Florida!

Yes, "more art outside of the art world than in it." In nearly every field of human activity I have found more real aesthetic product than is ever present in the imitative gallery stunt that we call our "art world"—ism, illustration, write-up and sale.

Rome could not be exhibited in a gallery, neither can the sky line of lower Manhattan—nor the tugboat or the "Matt M. Shay."

My kids' drawings are the "beginnings of American art" because they are the first and only pictures that have come "from the soil." They have real merit and are the best ever produced here. They are more personal and creative — they have never happened before. They are not imitative of anything. They are the only contribution in paint that America (U. S.) has so far made. True, they are immature. They are "beginnings"! No, I do not intend to keep them "creeping." I could not if I wanted to. They would walk in spite of me. I intend to help them walk through life in the company of the masters — but through *life*, not through the "art world." I do not want them to imitate or illustrate life, I want them to live it. I want them to know the steam shovel and Jack Johnson, the Panama Canal and Ty Cobb. I want them to know the Greek Apollo and Charlie Chaplin and "Spike" in "The Girl and the Game." I want them to know Walt Whitman and Nick Carter, Poe and Henry James. I want them to know the *East River*, the bridges and the Zoo and the "Fish Theatre." I want them to know the runners, the jumpers, the fighters, the clowns, the bareback and rough riders, the Indians and cowboys.

I want them to live American lives. They can't really live any other. I want them to express the life in terms of art. And until they do — until we have an art here — we will continue to be a

hyphenated nation. Democracy and democratic ideas have spread all over the world and the little extra we have to offer our citizenship will not compensate for the severing of ties that are bound together by a tradition, a culture, an art.

This is more important than a presidential election or the tariff and we will never be fully "prepared" until we have more art than ammunition. I should be glad to meet Mr. H——. I like the "business man." I respect him for not being "converted" to official art and admire him when he "quits early" to see a ball game. Yes, there's art in business and big art in "big business." In fact, it is this bigness that is the biggest quality we possess here. I want to see it expressed. It is the spirit that built Rome, Egypt and Pompeii.

Maybe my kids' kids or their kids will see the realization of something worth while. For myself, I have every faith in a great future for American Art.

Sincerely yours,

R. J. Coady

P. S.—Would like to hear from you before you go to Maine. Maybe you would like to exhibit some of the kids' things in the gallery there.

R. J. C.

III.

E. CROSS
Lit. Editor

THE SOIL
A Magazine of Literature and Art
47 WASHINGTON SQUARE, N. Y.

R. COADY
Art Editor

July 28th, 1916.

Dear Mrs. H——,

Just got your card today and telegraphed you. I got back to New York on the 15th but came down here to Brentwood and buried myself so as to finish up some personal things. I shall be glad to send you an exhibition of the kids' things. I can get them off in a few days after hearing from you. I intended to write you before this but was kept on the jump during my trip which by the way was not as successful as I had hoped. The Indians have ceased to be Indians. I visited one disappearing tribe who were famous for their beadwork, but, alas, that is a thing of the past. They're a lazy lot of loafers now and more civilized than I should care to be, thanks to our generous government and the swarms of missionaries. The government gives each Indian one hundred and sixty dollars a year

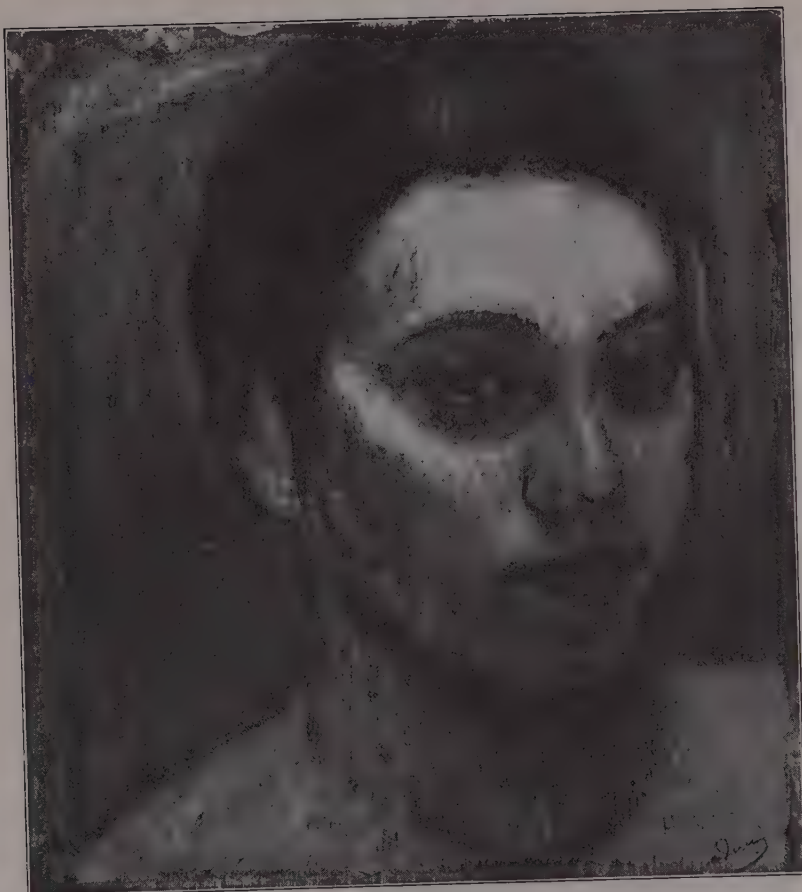
for his food and clothes and a snack of land, and if they clear the land they get horses and machinery to cultivate it. The missionaries give them a sappy sentimentality and fate has furnished them with rum, tuberculosis, smallpox and worse. There is no need to work. The popular stunt is to sell their land and go on a spree and live on the government's allowance. They are often victimized and I heard of one instance where an Indian "sold" his eight acres for five cents an acre. Some few have become wealthy by land speculation but there is no more of their art! I met one old fellow who had some of the past in him. They call him "Old John Smith." His Indian name is Ga-be-nr-quar-wence. He says he is 131 years old and remembers "when the stars used to fall." I asked him about the beadwork and he said "it was better when we used to play with it."

He is the hero of many battles and tells of having killed two men with one bullet. Last year in a blinding snowstorm he was hit by a freight train. They took him to the hospital where he refused "white man's bed" until another Indian first got into it. In six weeks he was well again. I asked him what he liked most and he quickly replied "turtle," but added, "I have no teeth for twenty years, give me white rice and doughnuts."

Our magazine will "see the light" in September and if you will let me know where you will be I shall mail you a copy. I read part of your book before leaving but did not get a chance to finish it. I think it is very feminine, in fact girly, and has a charm of simple narrative. I should like to see these qualities result more from your medium than from idea — that is, from words as words — I can't help thinking in this instance of "Melantha," one of the stories in Miss Stein's "Three Lives" where, through the medium, we get in my opinion, the finest expression of negro life ever written. Or to get nearer home — Bert Williams, who fairly revels in his medium. He can say the most commonplace thing, but this saying it makes it art. His fun with words, his inventions of obbligate and recitation, result in less "singing" but more voice and music than the good but over cultured Sembrich. After all, there are but two forms, three colors and a dozen ideas in existence and the various combinations to be formed from them are primarily matters of medium. Regards to Mr. H—— and the doctor.

Sincerely yours,

R. J. Coady



"HEAD" (PAINTING)

BY ANDRE DERAÏN



"THE FACTORY" (PAINTING)

BY THOMAS H. BENTON

AHEAD AND AROUND

BY LAURA RIDING GOTTSCHALK

Ahead and Around
Met, quarreled, quilled the bird of peace,
Untidied a pleasant plane.
Ahead accused Around of complete deceit.
Around accused Ahead of being discontented.
Neither listened to each.
Either lined on,
Making round straight and straight round,
Permitting nothing in-between,
Licked space clean,
Fattened unhappily and flew
Along the geometrical faith of two-and-two,
Hated apart; and far and far
Each wanderer
Hoped toward a spiritually reconnoitred heaven.

"For," cried sinuous Around,
"More and less than I, am I,
Nature of all things, all things the nature of me."
Ahead echoed the cry,
Sped toward its own eternity
Of the sweet end before the bitter beyond, beyond.
And both were brave and both were strong
And the ways of both were unlike and long
And adventured freely in fettered song:
One that circled as it sang,
One that longitudinally rang.

The spite prospered. The spite stopped.
Both earned the same end differently,
Prided along two different paths,
Reached the same humility
Of an old-trodden start.
Birth is the beginning where all part.
Death is the beginning where they meet.

EXTRACT FROM
TRANSCONTINENTAL

BY ROBERT MC ALMON

For two days the train went headlong through desert country where train stops were infrequent, and little scenery was visible except great barren stretches of sand, backed by mountains. Starved looking cows, or their long-dried skeletons, caught the eye occasionally. From the window could be seen an occasional horseman riding across the sand against a clear sky, far from the train. It was all much like the setting for desolate moving picture scenarios, or was it nature that had become melodramatic first, ahead of the scenario writers?

The terrifying dreary expanses of sand by, the train came into more populated country, and past stations surrounded by trees, into villages that showed a semblance of life, however disinclined to movement the depot loafers looked as they leaned against the station walls regarding travellers with indolent lizard-like curiosity. Kansas City was passed; and the third night Ni descended at the station in Chicago. It was keenly cold and it struck him sharply how stupid he had been not to remember that he would need winter clothing. He drew his light overcoat about him, however, and sought a cheap hotel. The next day he looked up Ludovici. At the address he knew he was informed that Ludovici was at a hospital, having been ill for three weeks. Ni betook himself to the hospital, wondering if the Italian was hard up financially, and if hunger had made him ill. When shown into the room which Ludovici occupied he noticed how littered the table by the bed was with cigarette stubs, and orange peels. Ludovici was sitting up in bed, with a book beside him which he surely could not have been reading. His body was slight, brown and emaciated. His long Italian face was yellowish and his dark eyes burned feverishly black out of the parchment pallor of his smooth visage.

"Is that you, Thompson? So that's what you look like," Ludovici said, eager, but with prying and almost resentful curiosity. "I wondered why you didn't write me. I thought my last letter

made you mad. I'm something to visit, isn't that so?" Ludovici inquired.

"I was disturbed and restless myself and thought there was no use writing you a morbid letter," Ni answered. "How do you happen to be here? Underfeeding, I suppose."

"Syphilis!" Ludovici answered shortly, and waited for effect. "The doctor says I've had it in me three years, and I'm in the second or third stage. I don't care. I've gone ahead. I haven't been afraid to take life."

"Um" Ni muttered, thinking 'Rimbaud to the end. Youth intent on being passionate.' Then he spoke. "Is there a chance of a cure, or is it too late?"

"I don't know. If it's the end, it's the end, and I won't pretend, or play-act anymore. I'm having some wonderful days, inside myself. I was picked off the street, mad, and running, not seeing where I was going. And the night before I had stayed up all night, writing, writing, writing. I was going to say it all out. Not hold anything back. Don't mind me if I'm incoherent today. I've just had a shot of syph-juice put in me, and I can feel my arteries taking it up. I still feel the lead-like throb of its pouring into me, and going through me."

"Yes, not an agreeable sensation, I suppose," Ni answered. "It's strange you didn't discover sooner you had it."

"What would have been the good? I had no money for treatments. There's ten places I could have got it. When I was first from Italy, and I was only seventeen then, I used to pace the streets at night, crazy. I didn't understand these American girls. And I would do anything, thinking I wouldn't care, and then I'd feel dirty. But I've gone ahead. Would you be shocked, I wonder, if I told you all that I've done."

Ludovici sat up in bed nervously, his thin, fine-featured face burning with the excitement of somebody to talk to. He spoke like a machine over-wound up, recklessly, vehemently boasting that he'd gone through with everything. Ni felt taken aback, and not knowing what to say, spoke little.

"The night before I was quite mad, when I was just tearing around the street, I had marvelous ideas, and I wanted to write. I had to write about what pain was. It wasn't anything in me. It wasn't finite. I was a drop in a sea of pain, and swept back and forth in the sea. I wanted to write it down, just to prove that suf-

fering doesn't exist. It doesn't matter, because you can't feel pain when everything about you is pain."

"Are you confined to your room all the time?" Ni asked, uncomfortably realizing that both pity and sympathy were useless to solve Ludovici's problem. "Perhaps you want books, or papers or something I can bring you."

"Just talk to me. I think you have an intellect. I want to talk, to talk all the time. I can go out and walk around the block with you. I'll ring and ask the nurse if I can take a little walk with you."

A few minutes later Ludovici was in his winter overcoat and ready to go down the steps into the chilly outside air.

"Grapefruit!" he said, lingering on the word as they started out of the room. His eyes had fallen on a basket of oranges someone had brought him. "If you would get me one I would love you. Luscious fruit. I could bury my head in the fragrance of it and breathe and breathe. There, I tell you, that is a fruit, with acid. That has health and vitality. That's something definite, and not rotten with decadence."

"I'll send you some," Ni said, ready to offer any aid he could in his dumfounding of Ludovici's predicament. What was his end to be? He had honesty, but did he have any horse sense beneath his self-dramatizing and hysteria?

"You're a funny fellow," Ludovici assured Ni as they were going down the stairs. "I thought you'd be much older looking, and solid, heavy maybe. I didn't think you'd be goodlooking, and almost nervous looking, except your face is a mask. And you are educated. You have an educated mind, haven't you? I hate schools though."

Beneath an emotion of bewildered irony a sinking sense of despondency was in Ni. How could he take Ludovici, and why be bothered by this problem? "I detest schools," he answered. "But I suppose I'm educated after a fashion, if you mean I've taken regular college courses. I'm not adjusted. I don't know how to use myself, or how to make a living decently. The thing called education I have to the extent that I can read and understand intellectually what is being said, and I know enough of foreign languages to understand such quotations as occur in English books. Maybe that's education. The ideas of learning, and science, and erudition, don't frighten me, and they don't command my admiration. If you must

know, I'm as lost as you are, inside myself, I suppose."

"I thought you'd be different. I thought you were a person sure of yourself and strong before the world," Ludovici said, viciously prying in his attempt to locate a sympathy or to establish the degree of their antagonism to each other's temperaments. "Your letters sounded so. They made me angry."

Ni laughed mechanically. "Yes. My letters. I haven't your ability, or your desire to pour myself out in letters, perhaps. What I was realizing in college was too hysterical for good letter material. You can correct your idea of me. I'm not a strong person, or sure of myself. Neither that dull, nor that balanced."

"I am sorry," Ludovici responded. "But no, I'm glad too, because you can understand me better. You won't think I am degraded for having syphilis, and for doing the things I told you. I told you at once so you could go away if you wanted to."

"No, no, it makes no difference. I wish you hadn't it because — what will be the end for you? But you had your experience without thinking too much — possibly. Anyway you really acted if you were play acting. I'm inclined to cringe from infection simply because it destroys vitality, but I don't with you. I wonder if I ever would, and if all that is supposedly fastidious in me isn't mere training?"

"You are a puzzling fellow," Ludovici answered. "When you first came into my room I disliked you for being goodlooking rather than the sort of man I'd expected to see. The women must like you, and make a fuss over you. But I began to love you a little, but I think I began to hate you too. You say the same kind of thing I do, only differently. What is it all? Why are there no great men in the world? We are all lice."

"No, no, please, not that," Ni said, cool with boredom.

"You love people then, and don't want them called lousy cowards."

"It isn't that. I simply am bored completely at men, and books, that go in for describing what a lowdown and filthy race human beings are. We are as we are, and we are all we know, or are apt to know. We take it or get out. Sometimes I like people very much, and they like me. Why do we have to place things more definitely than that? It's such a baby cry to go in for describing the lousiness of lousy humanity. I hated college because proofs are accepted there only so that men's ideas may be accepted. Why

need proofs be accepted? Can't the question be left open to investigation, and my theory or idea utilized so long as it functions, or until a new discovery replaces it."

Ludovici was striding down the street as though in an ecstatic trance. His slight, tall body wavered on its thin legs. A cheap woolen overcoat covered him, and was buttoned closely at his throat.

"Yes, yes. Things, things, never theories," Ludovici sang. "You do not know what it is to be outdoors again with somebody I like. The nurse took me out yesterday but her I could not talk to. The trees. The trees. The bare trees. See, they live. And these stone tenement houses that I have hated. And these streets made by shopkeepers that I have despised. I love it all because it can be touched. These aren't like the sick room and my madness, and my ideas that I put on paper. They are beautiful hard material, like flesh."

"It is marvelous, the feeling of being out after confinement. Sometimes too, the morning after a big drunk-on when one feels vague and light-headed and mystified it is nice to feel real things about."

"But whatever happens I have lived. See, I have the trees, and the houses. I began to see things now," Ludovici rhapsodized in a hysteria of ecstasy. Ni reflected. Ludovici had lived? No, no, that couldn't be. He'd done things that surely were detestable to every sensibility in him; done them like a driven animal, in despair, hungry, and panic stricken over poverty. But what was there to say? That could not be argued with Ludovici at this time.

"We both indulge in errors, I suppose," Ni answered. "We have much theory about life, and much talk about how we will live, whatever that process may be, but sometimes it may have to be just in the mind if more definite things are not about attracting us at any one time. Ideas are in the way or we wouldn't talk so much. The very idea of going to the depths is a damn fool intellectual idea. There are no depths if we actually knew what we want, and do it."

Ludovici did not get a personal meaning in Ni's remark, to either resent or to be made despondent by it. "I remember you said you studied metaphysics in college. You are talking it now," he answered. Amusement went through Ni as he regarded Ludovici swinging along beside him, loose-jointedly as a jumping doll. He gesticulated with his hands airily, and breathed profoundly of

the cold autumn atmosphere. He was trodding pneumatically. "Metaphysics bored me," Ni spoke. "At first no, until I began to believe that it was not so much a research as an evasion; a way of keeping from admitting what we don't know. It never solved a moment for me. Biology did in a manner, because, with it, time took on some kind of a relationship rather than an infinite abstraction. I began to feel that there was something back of us organically, which was more than the hope of a dumb religious instinct. There seemed no longer to be any oughts, any 'best ways' any shoulds. We, and things, just were. And there is no coming through, or not coming through, for any one individual. So one can just be."

"You are a wise man, Thompson," Ludovici said with a grand gesture of mature patronization. Ni was sure that he was not listening, and was glad for him that he was having this moment of physical joy in the outdoors, the trees, the sight of buildings, skylines, and an awareness of people about. But Ludovici responded quickly, like an automaton, showing that he was hearing and understanding. His disease then had not affected his mind.

"Many times I have agreed with myself," Ludovici held forth, "a theory is like a mood, and it goes, and it is as hard to recall vividly as a mood that has passed. How many times I have waked in the night with glorious ideas, and I would think I could not forget anything so wonderful, but in the morning they were gone."

"We had better turn back, hadn't we?" Ni suggested, fearful of overtiring Ludovici. They turned into the hospital, in front of which they had been walking up and down. In Ludovici's room Ni said he must be going on soon.

"I will send you grapefruit, and some cigars, but we won't see again," he said. "I go on to New York tonight because my finances are low, and I must get there to line up work soon."

"But you must stay. Do stay, and work in Chicago. You will have a hard time in New York. It is all Jew. Chicago is more wonderful."

"No, definitely I don't like Chicago. It is too aggressive and rushed. There is too much smoke, and clatter, and the city is thrown together and scattered out by an eagerly rushing hysterical mob of pork packers. I will get on in New York. I am an American, it won't be so hard on me as it was on you. I can translate, and typewrite, or do manual labor, but it must be New York now."

"But this Chicago! It is beautiful. This is the soul of Ame-

rica. The poets here have a sweep. There is nothing pale about them. Things go on here, and it is cruel like a healthy animal, or as a machine is cruel. You must know Chicago, if you are to write about America."

"If it were cruel! I think it's pathetic. People are so eagerly informed here, so anxious to exhibit the poetry in their souls. They bore hell out of me. I am just as American as Chicago is, and I intend bearing no torchlit banner proclaiming what America is. I'm as much it as anybody, or anything, is, and so I don't need to play up to any one quality which might be called American at the moment. And I don't like Chicago poetry. It is a grand wheeze, a bluff of humanitarianism. Their derivation from Whitman, who was windy enough, is bad derivation. I know they are tired. They can't pull too much of their virile he-man stuff on me. I like the throb and flash of city life, and the look of a brightly polished dynamo, and jazz and cosmopolitan hysteria of life. Let it mesmerize me, I don't mind being made to run loose, but not in Chicago. No, no. I must go on to New York tonight. There I can lose myself easier. It is pressed together, and there is no great barren stretch of factory buildings, and ugly streets tricking one into thinking that outside, outside, there might be something. New York sits on me, and I feel where its limits are geographically, and how much I have to put up with. I'm sick of rebellion."

"You will run away from America like other Americans have done, I think. I thought you would not," Ludovici said.

"No," Ni answered. "If I go I shall not run away. You came away from Italy. America is made up of people who came away from their native countries. I shall go because I will hope to find life more gracious elsewhere, or more fitted to utilize the thing I am. I believe that the kind of civilization which is in America will be everywhere soon, for a period of time, but that doesn't make a market for the kind of beings we are, now, here in America. Civilization here started as a transplanted affair. It has become a new kind now, but inhabitants here are not adjusted to it, and no one can help it if some are educated in a way that misfits them for serving its demands. Fifty different races, and class backgrounds, do not come to serve a one-race end in a generation or so. I think I do want to get away from America, and I have no belief that I can't do that and remain as much an American as any person can be at this particular stage. We at least have the right to select and

reject that you had in coming to America, or that our first colonists had."

Ludovici had crawled back into bed and lay back, tiredly, all the while that his blackish eyes searched into Ni with a savage curiosity. Ni shook hands with him, wondering if his remarks had offended the Italian's romantic idea of the great new thing in the world, America. "I will write you a letter from New York. Goodbye. It has been good to talk to you," Ni told him.

"You are a funny fellow, Thompson," Ludovici said. "That man Sandburg is a great poet. He is a great man. You are a damnfool if you say he isn't a great poet. One day I was at his house and he gave me beer which he had brewed himself. He is a great man. Any man who can brew poetry and beer as he does is a great man. He comes from the land."

"I'm sorry," Ni said, grinning. "Have him a great man. I can't read his writing, but I can't read Knut Hamsun either. Sandburg came from Scandinavian peasant stock. He says nothing to my intuitions because I can never understand the simplicity of peasants. That may be a failure, or it may be recognizing how relative all qualities are. He hasn't their simplicity however. His ad copy-writer style, and his blaring imagism strikes as noisy and mediocre pretentiousness on my senses."

"Goodbye then, Thompson," Ludovici answered. "When I am eating the grapefruit you send me I will think I love you a little again. You make me mad. You are almost a lovable person, but you will run away. You will run away."

Ni laughed helplessly, amused, and with confusing ideas forming already in his mind about what he should do as soon as he was away. How could people talk about America in a one-quality way, as if it did not vary with every hundred mile interval of it, racially, climatically, and somewhat in conventions? Could not people be allowed to grow, or to be thwarted, like plants, taking from whatever soil such nourishment as they needed and could get? He was glad however to have talked to Ludovici. It calmed him. It occurred to him that Ludovici was the first person he had encountered to whom he could talk freely, sure that what he said would be easily understood, if not sympathized with. What a fool he had been to stay out in California so long amongst the corn- and hog-raising retired farmers from Iowa. But Ludovici was an Italian. Would there be people in New York who were individuals, or

would they all be standardized Americans, New York variety?

The next day Ni arrived in New York, and knowing the city from previous short stays there he went from the station towards Eighth Street, west, seeking to locate a room in a low-priced rooming house. It was not before lunch, however, that he decided upon one, as rents were high, and the room seemed impossible to live in. However, sheer need to have a room forced him to take a skylight room on Ninth Street. It was tiny, large enough only to hold a narrow bed, a small table, and a washstand. His two suitcases would make it too crowded for moving about in it, but he consoled himself with the idea that he would not be in much, and should he line up a position he could get a better room later on. The ventilation came from the skylight window above his head. At least he would not be chilly, however cold the weather in so stuffy a room.

CONNUBIAL BLISS

BY ROBERT L. WOLF

My lusts like hungry greyhounds run and bell
And crash the bush, impatient of delay —
Too long in leash, bounding too long at bay —
Or like a young boy's rifle, when the smell
Of acrid powder smoke has worn too well
On young nerves tightened through too long a day;
Or as an angry Satan, long away,
Regains in glee the furnace mouth of Hell!

Why is this body passive in my hands?
How can I use this mild and docile form
Pliantly spread to render what demands
I may be pleased to utter? How shall I,
Touched by this patient angel on the thigh,
Wrestle with devils in a thunderstorm?

ETCHED IN MOONLIGHT

BY JAMES STEPHENS

CHAPTER XIV.

In a little time I had reaccustomed myself to the new order of things. The immediate past of wandering and strife grew less to be remembered, and my new way of life became sequential and expected.

I knew, and there is contentment in that kind of knowledge, exactly what I would do on the morrow; and I might have ventured a prediction as to how I should be employed in the month to come. For life gathered about me in a web of unhasty occupation and untiring leisure; so that the thing to be done and the doing of it flowed sweetly to each other; and all was accomplished without force, and almost without volition.

Many times my horse took that well-remembered road, and it became as natural to me to turn in that direction as to turn to the rooms of my own house. For I found there much that I desired, even unconsciously: friendship, companionship, and, more than all, gaiety; for their young lusty brood began to knit themselves about my life and knot themselves into it.

To go from a sedate, unruffled house into a home that seethes with energy and innocence, and all the animation of budding life, is a notable thing for one who has come to the middle term; and though he had before suffered children with a benevolent impatience, he grows to be thankful if they will notice him with even an approach to interest.

It is a blessed thing that whoever wishes to be welcomed benevolently by a child will be so welcomed; for the order of young years is to respond, and they do that without reservation. Children and animals, however we can hurt, we cannot hate; for they are without reserve; and that lack is the one entirely lovable thing in the world.

In the meantime events moved with me, for they, having settled their own lives, charged themselves with the arrangement of mine; and, by a delicate, untiring management, I found myself growing

more friendly or more accustomed to a lady of her kin; whom at last they expected me to marry; who certainly expected to marry me; and whom I should wed when the time came with neither reluctance nor impatience. But this lady I do not remember even slightly. She is a shade; a fading smile; and exists for me as a dream within the dream.

It was settled, and whether I or they or she arranged it I no longer know. It may have been just propinquity, or that sense of endlessness, that inertia of speech, which causes one to continue talking when there is no more to be said; so that, and inevitably, one asks a girl to marry one, there being nothing left to be said; and she, terrified lest silence should fall upon her, agrees to do so, and marvels thereat until she is endlessly wed.

So I asked and she replied; and those who take charge of such arrangements took charge of this; and settled all about time and place, and removed every impediment to our union.

CHAPTER XV.

It was the night before my wedding, and I was filled with that desolation of the traveller who must set forth on the morrow, and does not quite know where he is going, or why he should go there. I had, as was now my custom, taken horse and gone to the castle. The girl I should marry was there, and those two who walked like gods on the earth and who stirred like worms, in my mind.

We talked and ate, but beyond that I can only remember the atmosphere of smiles and kindness to which I was accustomed.

My recollection begins towards nightfall. I had kissed that girl's hands, and she went away to her bed; and I was preparing to perform the same duty to my hostess, when she postponed it.

"It is a lovely night," she said, "and," looking at her husband meaningly, as I thought, "after to-morrow we three will not be the companions we have been. We shall not meet so often of so carelessly."

To my glance of enquiry she continued, smilingly:

"A husband belongs to his wife. Your leisure will henceforth have so many claims on it that we may see little of you. When we see you again we may, like drunken men, see you double."

My glance was humorous, but questioning.

"Let us take a last walk," she suggested.

"Yes," her husband assented, "one more walk of comrades; one more comfortable talk, and then let to-morrow work what changes it may."

It was a lovely night, with a sky swept bare of all but the moon.

High in the air, bare and bright and round, she rode in beauty; and, but for her, we might have seen how lonely was the blue serene that swung about her.

Naught stayed in that immense for eye or ear. Naught stirred or crept. All slept but sheer, clear space and silence; but they, with the wonder of the wide, high heaven, were wonderful.

Afar, apart, in lovely alternating jet and silver, the sparse trees dreamed. They seemed as turned upon themselves. As elves they brooded; green in green; whisht and inhuman and serene.

All moved within. All was indrawn. All was infolded and in solitude. The sky, the grass, the very earth rejected knowing; and we hied with the moon as though she and we were atune to naught beside.

Against that blank withdrawal we struggled as the uneasy dead may, who would regain a realm in which they can find no footing. Silence came on us as at a command; and we were separated and segregated, each from the other, and from all things, as by a gulf.

I looked to the faces on either side of me. They were thin and bright and utterly unknown to me. They seemed wild and questing. Stern-poised eagle profiles that were alien in every way to the friendly faces I had known.

And I!

I could not see my own face, but I could feel it as a blanch of apprehension.

CHAPTER XVI.

Why should fear thus flood my being? For there was nothing within me but fear. I was a blank that swirled with terror; and was stilled as suddenly to a calmness scarcely less terrifying. I strove to engage my thoughts in common things; and, with that purpose, I scanned on every side so that my mind might follow my eye and be interested in its chances.

But in the moonlight there is no variety. Variety is color, and

there was about me but an universal shimmer and blanch, wherein all shape was suppressed, and nothing was but an endless monotony and reduplication of formless form.

So we went; and in the quietude we paced through and the quietness we brought with us we scarce seemed living beings.

We were spectres going in a spectral world. Although we walked we did not seem to move; for to that petrified universe our movement brought no change; and each step was but an eddy in changeless space.

I looked at them; at those faces cut by the moon to a sternness of stone; and I knew that I was not going between friends, but between guards; and that their intention towards me was pitiless.

My will was free. I could have turned and walked backwards, and they would not have hindered me in any way. But they might have smiled as they turned, and that smile would be deadly as an arrow in the heart.

To dare be a coward how courageous one must be!

I thought with envy of those whose resolution is so firm that they can fly from danger while there is yet a chance.

But to be a coward and to be afraid to save oneself! Into what a degradation must one have fallen for that!

I clenched my hands, and at the contact of my nails I went cold to the bone.

CHAPTER XVII.

At a certain moment each of those silver-pale faces seemed to look more straitly, more distantly; and I, withdrawing my eyes from the grey-toned vegetation at my feet, looked forward also.

We had reached the extreme of the park. Beyond was a rugged, moon-dozed tumble of earth and bush and rock; and beyond again was the vast silver-shining keep to which, in years long gone, we three had walked, and from which, and in what agony, I once had fled.

In the miracle we call memory I recovered that night, and was afflicted again with the recollection of clasping and unclasping hands, of swaying bodies, and of meeting and flying eyes.

But the same hands made now no mutual movement. Those eyes regarded nothing but distance; and those bodies but walked and did no more. It was my hands that twitched and let go; my

eyes that looked and flinched away; my body that went forward while its intuition and intention was to go back.

In truth, I did halt for a heart's-beat; and when I moved again, I was a pace in advance, for they had stayed on the instant, and could not move again so quickly as my mood drove.

I looked at them no more. I looked at nothing. My eyes, although wide, were blind to all outward things, and what they were seeing within me it would be hard to tell.

Was I thinking, or feeling, or seeing internally? For I was not unoccupied. Somewhere, in unknown regions of my being, there were busynesses and hurrys, and a whole category of happenings as out of my control as were the moods of those who went with me.

CHAPTER XVIII.

All thought is a seeing. No idea is real if it be not visualised. To see is to know; to know is to see clearly, and other knowledge than that is mechanical. But as we cannot see beyond a stated range of vision, so we cannot speak beyond a definite range of thought. Fear has never uttered itself; nor has joy; nor any emotion that has quickened beyond normality. These stir in a mood too remote for expression by words that are fashioned to tell the common experience of thought and action.

How should I tell that which was happening to me as I trod forward; my face as impassive as theirs; my brow as calm? The reaction to extreme events is in the spine or the pit of the stomach, but the action is elsewhere, and is in an organ unchartered yet by man.

I trod with them, free to all appearance as a man can be, and yet bound by fetters which had been forged through long years by myself for myself.

We halted, and I looked again on the bossed and monumental door which stood in my memory almost as a living thing. It was as it had been formerly. A black gape, little more than a foot wide, yawned from the top to the bottom. I noticed the rough herbage sprouting grossly among pebbles at its foot, and the overhanging jut of harsh stone that crowned or frowned from its top. And then I looked at them.

His gaze was bent on me, massive as the stone itself.

"Go in," he said.

I looked at her, and although her lips said nothing, her eyes, gleaming whitely in the moonlight, commanded as sternly as her husband's voice.

"Go in," he said harshly, "as we went in, and get out, if you can, as we got out."

He reached a monstrous hand to my shoulder; but, at my motion to put it aside, he let it fall; and instead his hand took hold of the great knob. I cast one look at the vast, white moon; at the steady blue spaces about it; at the tumbled sparkle that was the world; and, without a word, I squeezed through the narrow aperture.

I turned and looked back.

I had one glimpse of a black form set in a dull radiance. Then the door closed on me with a clang that echoed and echoed and echoed in my ears long after its cause had ceased.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was dark where I was. It was a darkness such as I had never experienced. The blackness about me was solid as ebony. It was impenetrable to thought itself.

It flooded my brain, so that the blindness within me was as desperate as that without. I could not keep my eyes open; for, being open, they saw the darkness. I dared not close them; for, being closed, I became that darkness myself. . . .

And at every moment, from the right hand and the left, from before me and from behind me, I imagined things! Darknesses that could move, silences that could touch . . .

I dared not realize my speculations, and yet, in lightning hints, my mind leaped at and fled from thoughts that were inexpressible, except as shivers. My flesh twitched and crept, and I shrank from nothing, as though it could extend a claw; as though it could clutch me with an iron fist . . .

I was standing yet, long after they had gone, beside the door; fearing to move from it; afraid to stir; and looking about me, as it were, with my ears.

I had no anger against them. I was too occupied for any emotion but those, or that which was present. I ceased even to think about them; or such seconds of thought as chanced through my

agony were humble. They were nor forgiving or regretful; they were merely humble, as the thoughts of an overdriven sheep might be towards its driver.

They were gone; and with them everything had gone. I was surrounded by nothingness. I was drowned in it. I was lost and solitary as some grey rock far out in sea. Nay, for the sun shines on it, the wind comes, and a gannet halts there and flaps his wing.

There was loneliness nowhere, but where I was. There was not such a silence even in the tomb as the silence in which I was centred; for while the terror of darkness did not diminish the horror of silence began to grow. And it grew as some monstrous thing may that reproduces itself on itself, tirelessly, timelessly, endlessly.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and so does the mind, for the mind is nature. It will contrive sound when silence oppresses it, and will people any desolation with its own creatures. Alas, for man! With what pain he can create a meagre joy! With what readiness he can make real a misery!

And my ears had two duties to perform! They must look for me as well as listen, and when the mind is occupied in two endeavors something of craziness comes, even in trivial things.

I began to hear, and at no time could I tell what I heard. I began to see, and no words will impart what I saw. I closed both eyes and ears with my fingers, and was aware in a while that my under jaw was hanging; that my mouth was open; and that I was listening and looking through that.

At the knowledge my will awakened, and I placed calmness forcibly on myself as though I were casing my soul in mail. I strode firmly to get my right hand, and after a few steps I came against a wall. I strode in the opposite direction, and in double the paces I came against a wall. I walked backwards, and in twenty steps I came against a wall; and, following this, my groping fingers tapped suddenly in space.

There was an aperture . . .

CHAPTER XX.

My hair rose on my head stiff and prickling. I did not dare to enter that void in the void. I would more willingly have leaped

into a furnace. I went from it on tip-toe, striving to make no sound lest that hole should hear me, and tread behind . . .

It would come noiselessly. And yet it would be heard! It would roll gently, overwhelmingly, like some new and unimaginable thunder —

"No . . . !" I said in panic to my soul, as I trod cautiously from that behind.

"Great God!" I thought, as I stood somewhere, for now I had lost all direction, and was nowhere. "Great God, what shall I do?"

I lowered myself secretly to the ground, groping with a blind hand to make sure that nothing was there.

"I shall try to sleep," I said in my mind.

Nay, I said it to my mind; striving to command that which I had never learned to control. I huddled my knees up and curved my chin forward like a sleeping dog. I covered my face with my hands, and was still as the stone on which I lay.

"I shall try to sleep," I said. "I shall think of God," I said.

And it seemed to me that God was the blankness behind which might advance; and that nothing was so awful as the thought of Him—unimaginable and real! withheld, and imminent, and threatening, and terrific! My knees were listening for Him to the front of me; my back was hearkening for Him behind; and my brain was engaged elsewhere in matters which I could not cognise.

"If I were to speak aloud!" I thought.

And some part of my mind dared me to do so; wheedled at me to utter one clapping shout; but I knew that at the sound of my own voice I should die as at a stroke.

CHAPTER XXI.

How long did that last? Was it an hour, a year, a lifetime?

Time ceases when emotion begins, and its mechanical spacings are then of no more account. Where is time when we sleep? Where is it when we are angry? There is no time, there is but consciousness and its experiences.

I stayed where I had lain myself, and whether my eyes were open or closed I no longer knew.

The miseries of this place had abated. No, that does not express it, for this was no longer a place. This place had disappeared, or it had been merged in the new dimension which I call Nowhere.

It is immeasurably great; it is unimaginably small; for, as there is no time, so there is no space; there is only being, and its

modes; and in that region my misery continued itself far from the knowledge of this brain, and beyond the let or hindrance of this body.

And yet somewhere, somehow, I knew something that I can only think of as nothing. An awful, a deadly business was proceeding with me as the subject. It can only be expressed negatively. Thus I may phrase it; I had gone in the spirit into that aperture from which I had fled. I was in contact with the unmanifest, and that is, in its own sphere, as competent and enduring as are its extensions with which we are familiar. But of what I cannot speak; for as it was out of range of these senses, so it was out of range of this mind whose sole preoccupation are these senses.

I had been in terror, but in what was I now? How little to me was the human absence of light, the normal absence of sound that had frightened me.

I was nowhere, and it was real. I was nothing and I was enduring. I would have returned to my blank, dumb prison as one flies to a Paradise, but I could not, for something had happened to me. I was translated; and until that experience was fulfilled I could not regain myself or evade in any way my happenings.

Therefore, I do not know how long I remained crouched in that stony den; or how I lay; nor aught that happened to me. But at a point I did return to normal consciousness, and that as swiftly as though one had taken me by the shoulders and clicked me to another direction.

All that monstrous something-nothing ceased; and I was listening with these ears, and staring through known darkness with these eyes that see you.

There were footsteps outside the door, and in an instant the door grinned and screeched and swung.

CHAPTER XXII.

It was those two.

But I did not move from where I lay, and when I did so it was because he lifted me. Those giant arms could lift me as one plucks up a cat; and in a moment I was walking, and the arm that was yet around my waist was pressing me lovingly to his side.

"We were only playing with you," he said.

And she at my other side cooed, as she fondled my hand:

"It was only a game."

I looked wordlessly from one to the other and laughed gently.

It was strange that I did not wish to speak. It was stranger still that I would not speak; and to everything that they said I returned my gentle laugh. That, it seemed to me, must be sufficient communion, even for them, and who in the world could wish to speak when he might laugh?

We walked on, slowly at first, and then hastily, and sentences came from one to the other across me; sometimes explanations, at times assertions and assents.

"It took us ten minutes to get out," he said, "and we thought—"

"For you are so much cleverer than we," she interposed.

"That you would have been home almost as quickly as we were."

"It took us ten long minutes to imagine that although the door was closed it might not be fastened," he went on, "but when I pulled on it it opened at once."

"I was glad to see the moonlight," he continued in a tone of reverie.

"Glad ! ! " she exclaimed.

"Those ten minutes were unpleasant," he assented.

"They were wicked," she exclaimed energetically. "They—" She paused, and took my arm again: "They are forgotten and forgiven. Our thoughts of each other now can be all frankness and trust."

I must have been imprisoned for some hours, for when I went in there had been a bright moon in a bare sky, where now there was no moon, and the heavens were deeply shadowed. Our faces were visible to each other as dull shapes, and the spaces about us were bathed in that diaphanous darkness through which one looks without seeing, and against which things loom rather than show.

A wonderful feeling of well-being flowed through me, warming and bracing me. A feeling of astonishing rest for myself, and of endless affection for my companions.

And with it all there was a sense, confused and yet strong, that I knew something which they did not know. That I had a secret which would astonish them when they discovered it.

I knew they would discover it, for I should reveal it to them myself as soon as I became aware of what it really was. And my

mind was filled with joy at the thought of how I should surprise them, and of how they would be surprised.

That strange knowledge lay like a warmth at my heart. It lit the dull night for me, so that, through the gloom and mirk, I walked as on air and in radiance. All that I had gone through vanished from my memory. It was as though it had never been. Nothing was any more but this new-found rest and contentment.

Happiness! I had found it at last; and it was more worth finding than anything I had yet experienced.

But the end of our walk was nigh. At a distance was the gleam of lights, and black silhouettes about them. We increased our pace, I, willingly enough, for I wished to tell them a secret; and in a short time we came to the great steps and mounted them. Men were there with torches, and we walked gaily from darkness into light.

Reaching the top, on the wide platform before the door, she turned to me with a smile, and she stopped dead. I saw the smile frozen on her face. I saw her face blanch to the whiteness of snow, and her eyes widen and fix and stare. She clasped her bosom with both hands and stood so, staring.

Then something, a self of me, detached itself from me, and stood forward, and looked also.

I saw myself.

My mouth was twisted sideways in a jolly grin. My eyes were turned inwards in a comical squint, and my chin was all a sop of my own saliva.

I looked at myself, so, for a mortal moment, and I awakened.

THE END.

BOOK REVIEWS

VAGABONDAGE

THOMAS THE IMPOSTOR. *By Jean Cocteau. New York:*
D. Appleton and Co.

BEGGARS OF LIFE. *A Hobo Autobiography. By Jim Tully.*
New York: Albert and Charles Boni.

Come, my songs, let us express our baser passions.

*Let us express our envy for the man with a steady job and no worry
about the future.*

— EZRA POUND

A rejection of experience may take the form of an isolation in instances, as with Aldous Huxley's debilitated and unintegrated dissociations. It may occasion a deflection into a spurious compensatory device which is popularly known as "imaginative writing," as in the supple withdrawals and the delicately cachinnatory disavowals of James Branch Cabell. Historical garrulities, as a rule, are an even more patent evidence of "second story repartee." Unfortunately a recollection of times past, in which the author is at once the hero and the villain, is not altogether free of the insidious invasions of afterthought.

Occasion makes the man. It made of Guillaume Thomas a liar, and of Hobo Jim Tully, the red-headed Irish kid, a dreamer, each with a poisonous canker at his heart. Jean Cocteau consciously sidesteps the present in a grandiose incursion upon the future, while Tully instinctively dresses the past in the glow of a non-existent present. Cocteau disingenuously depends upon the histrionic eliminations of a character to provide a stark clarity of unerring satire. The result is a facile simplification into soft-nosed sarcasm, which somehow fails to spread, or even to wound. Tully leaves no doubt as to his opinions.

"The war began," M. Cocteau begins, "in the greatest disorder. This disorder never ceased from the beginning to the end . . . This perennial disorder, the conqueror of solid order, was nonetheless disorder. It was favorable to extravagant ideas." At any rate, it was favorable to Guillaume Thomas, and to the Princesse de Borme. Thomas was born in the village of Fontenoy and sixteen years later, in Paris, he was still gratefully reminiscent of that fact. If you asked him his name, he would instantly and ingenuously reply: "Guillaume Thomas de Fontenoy." What appeared to be merely circumstantial frankness, however, was, in French, a patent of nobility, and an assumption of an entire order of relations and social stations. On this frail basis, M. Cocteau has erected the fantastic adventures of young Thomas.

As the translator, Mr. Lewis Galantieri, explains in his introduction, "Thomas" "happens to be a 'war book' ". M. Cocteau is mercifully under no such compulsion toward moral earnestness as an American or English writer would be. M. Cocteau treats the war seriously, but he has first reduced it to a phantom-like irreality. He is abstract without being general. None will be able to support decisive and important opinions from his book. He neither upholds nor blasts "idealism," of any stripe, either as a justification of conduct, or as a meaningless program for making oneself interesting to very young girls and nice old ladies. American idealism is commonly something to be outgrown or overlooked, except in novels and speeches and editorials, and other public utterances. It reduces to a fixed determination in the subject to act or rather to intend to act, always to his own discomfort or disadvantage and thereby augment his self-respect with that contemptuous sympathy which always accrues to victims of incurable diseases. High ideals, in this sense, follow as an inevitable condition, since the higher the ideal the more readily a lapse or even a complete failure to "live up" to it is to be condoned and the greater the unearned commiseration. M. Cocteau is an idealist, not of this childish order of boot-strap gymnastics, but in the stricter philosophical significance. The world of objects is transformed as emanations from and manifestations of an idea, and the idea is Thomas.

Thomas, then, is projected into the war at sixteen, not to test out and vindicate some impossible theory of the affirmations of suffering, the crucible of self-sacrifice, the tyranny of the mob over the sensitive individual, the solemn duty of being trivial (according to the gospel of Mr. Carl Van Vechten), or the dignity and sanctity of human existence. He is not even an item in a sentimental broadcasting of pacifism. It should by now be clear that "Thomas the Impostor" is not an important book. Thank God for that.

Thomas is not so much a point of focus as an incitement to a cohesion of sorts. His single vision precipitates a glare of affective light in the dark of multifarious logic. He feels, therefore he is, and he feels first of all the latent substance of himself. Circumstance unerringly steers him into the status of a "somebody." Generals and colonels and war ministers are confronted with immediate crises in chaos, which resolve themselves somehow in spite of an insulation, through incontrovertible reasoning, of each fact from every other fact, by way of preparing a campaign. Thomas moves upon them, fortified by the magic name, "de Fontenoy," and — requisitions revolvers. It is all a game to Thomas. His self-inflated legend reverberates upon his being and renews itself. Yet M. Cocteau's eagerness to divorce Thomas of extraneous considerations and invest him with the priceless innocence of a perfect catalytic agent has left Thomas barren of all but the most primitive initiative. In order to be incessantly at the beginning of things, Thomas is born and dies in any moment. In order to supply an equivalent of the missing well of affected memory in Thomas, M. Cocteau is obliged to elaborate upon the results of Thomas, or rather of Thomas plus an interested will to believe Thomas. The lad progresses, not by active deceits,

but by an acquiescence in convenient misconceptions. The ensuing coordinations of the lies of Thomas may indeed irradiate a consistent splendor upon unrelated and confusing grey phenomena. He may be a beautifully elemental unreason beneath the hideous certainties of red tape. Yet it remains questionable if Thomas be not an imposture. The book has grace and proportion and economy — at the expense of simplicity.

If Thomas is the refinement of sophistication, "Beggars of Life" is the raw stuff of literature. M. Cocteau is at pains to clear away, in his subject, or instrument, the impertinences of morality and logic and leaves Thomas as almost an indiscretion. The life Jim Tully has led has conspired to render him an almost perfect receptor, clear of creeds and codes and carefulness and cant. Yet Jim Tully, as if embarrassed to find himself unencumbered, has reached forth and covered himself with the tag-ends of literary cliché and the respectable toga of idealism. Tully visualized himself as "a heavy-jowled, red-headed youth, with a crooked smile and a freckled face, clad in cast-off clothing." He is shamed, by a juvenile hobo, into leaving a "humdrum life in a humdrum town" for the road. Yet he looks back on the town, and its standards rankle. He will return a rich man, and command their respect. He is "a throw-back to the ancient Irish tellers of fairy tales." He gives a sense of an adventurer and spectator, masquerading as it were in strange scenes, which is verified in the amazing avowal: "I was never to overcome my revulsion from the filth of it all. If my clothing was lousy, I watched clouds sailing across the moon and heard linnets chirping and larks singing."

Jim Tully has apparently seen much and experienced little. His contribution to his factual material is either a dribble over sporting women and the warped wisdom of hoboes, or the reverse of sentimentalism, that cheap bitterness which may obsevr: "Wet gypsies of life we were, asking little, and getting less, and deserving less than that." Jim Tully is torn between an impulse to frankness and the afterthoughts of gentility. The vision of a night on a freight-train must be blurred to make way for the observer, who must be depicted as having "a dream tapping at his brain." There is a hint of an identification with Maxim Gorky, and the resultant self-justification, in the reference to the "brilliant ex-tramp," and his return to the road. "It was the caged eagle returning to the mountains of its youth for a last look at the carefree life it had known. It remained a year, and found that the vast and lonely places were the same, but the blood had slowed around the eagle heart, and it flew back to the valley again, wearier than before — the last illusion gone."

Tully is able to see in bums and hoboes a kind of thwarted poetry and beauty, as of the old rebel described as "a magnificent drunkard, quite the greatest I have ever known." He hits upon, almost as if by accident, revelations of grotesque incongruities and meaningless frustrations. He is constrained, to offer social and political and economic interpretations. He gives a true and telling picture of himself as bound up and isolated by his own reticences, and, as if aware of the implied gaps, he fills them with the results

of moods, with conclusions and philosophizings, and with such "ah, well's," as "shabby tricksters of life," "the ethics of the road are brutal and strange," and the "greed of hungry men was the only thing that spoiled the scene."

Tully transcribes the words of hobo songs, and omits or bowdlerizes the more ribald sections. There is only a stray hint here and there of that curious phase of road faring, the relation between the "jocker," and the young "punk," who is a slave and servant in somewhat the status of a "faggot" in English public school life. Beyond the epithet "degenerate," and a hasty indictment of a society organized for acquisition, this phenomenon, like Tully's impressions, is mediatized by that yearning for respectability which mars the work.

It would seem that Tully had an unusual opportunity to review this life, from the inside of jails, the backdoors of homes, the under side of railway cars, the hobo jungles. Instead he has turned away and stared at it obliquely in the romantic mirror of self-pity. The episode of "Oklahoma Red" had a germ of an epic, in its account of a leader and a positive, acting force, a Robin Hood or an El Raisuli, diverted to safe-cracking, drunken brawls, and drink, and hatred of the society which has rejected him. "Oklahoma Red," however, is an impact on the feelings only by the most heroic effort of the imagination. He is little more, actually, than a peg on which to hang an anecdote, and build an argument.

Tully is so far ahead, in sophistication and subtlety and comprehension, of that pathetic braggart who styled himself "A No. 1" and left his "monicker," with an arrow giving his directions and the date, on countless water-tanks and cement walls and stations, and wrote his memorabilia for sale from train butcher's baskets, that he is all the more acutely a disappointment. In the final analysis, both Tully and Cocteau have limited themselves, possibly involuntarily, to an exercise in writing.

JOHN W. CRAWFORD

EMOTIONAL CRITICISM

MEN SEEN, *By Paul Rosenfeld, New York: The Dial Press.*

After all, a critic's estimate of others is the most perfect estimate of himself. Even if his approach be crystal cold and austere with objective probing. Even if he abjure gusto and detest spreading himself over the creations of others. Even if he scout the notion of criticism being the adventures of his soul among masterpieces and seek to formulate, to trace the significant lines behind a period's expression, to distinguish sharply between dross and pure gold. How much more then if, like Paul Rosenfeld, he hail the "unrationalistic critic," glorify the "sense of flow," and instead of clarifying a book, a man, a period flush all in a fog of undefined feeling.

In this book of twenty-two "men seen" and two women, Paul Rosenfeld devotes a paper to Herbert J. Seligmann. Paul Rosenfeld sees in Seligmann "the much needed unrationalistic critic more in embryo than in figure."

He also prophesies a "sense of flow" for the embryo since "no sense of pitch comes unaccompanied by a sense of flow." Now of course Paul Rosenfeld long since hatched from embryo, long since established his ability to flow most gushingly. He stands, by his own definition, prototype of the much-needed unrationalistic critic. And if we are not clear as to just what he means by unrationalistic criticism we have but to study these papers of his and the key to the mystery will be ours.

We have studied. Or rather, we have absorbed, for it is impossible to study the formless. And having taken stock we find a residuum of emotional riches. Which is all that can be said in favor of Paul Rosenfeld's criticism. These emotional, these intuitional riches are invaluable to a critic. But undisciplined they are dangerous. Without standards, save only immediate, personal reactions, they may lead to no end of inconsistency, of confusion. They find expression in a lyrical overflow which feeds on itself and is carried by its own momentum ever farther and farther from the subject criticized. The end is always a justification of self — yes, in spite of Paul Rosenfeld's dictum — a rationalization of self, for which the subject is only the spring board for the leap into an emotional welter. *Custo* can never be a sufficient substitute for judgment, nor personal taste a substitute for critical standards.

It is perhaps unfair to Paul Rosenfeld to discuss his paper on Waldo Frank, for here we have emotional criticism at its worst. Certainly this paper creates a margin of prejudice against the book which might not otherwise be patent. Still, like the proverbial chain a critic can hardly be stronger than his weakest link. If Rosenfeld is content to let hot passions blind his estimate of one contemporary he cannot easily enlist our confidence in his critical ability.

As Paul Rosenfeld himself might put it, his paper on Waldo Frank is astonishingly flawed. He begins by handing Frank some gorgeous bouquets.

"Frank stands vigorous, aggressive, hot-blooded among American writers. If natural brilliance does constitute genius, then something of that wondrous principle may be said to reside in him. The traits of the individual who has set moving these solid tides of prose has constructed in theory, at least, as complicated patterns of human relationships as those of *The Dark Mother* and *Holiday*, must appear substantial to every eye. The literary culture and intellectual background involved in these constructions would distinguish its possessor, were he a Frenchman, in *Lutece* herself; and in Manhattan such mental equipment towers. Nevertheless . . ."

Ah nevertheless! There's the rub. For suddenly Paul Rosenfeld begins furiously to rend from Frank those bouquets he handed him a moment since. But a few pages back he told us "*Our America* contains critical formulations and appraisements of the American situation profound and scarcely to be improved upon. Now behold "*Our America* stands a brilliant sketch." Only to fall still farther from grace a little later: "*O u r*

America showed him obsessed with the conception of the 'defeated Jew'." Which might be called, I suppose, the decline and fall of Our America.

And in another paper were we not told that Jacob Wasserman is able to show that the saint and the criminal are one? Evidently what is sauce for Jacob Wasserman is only apple sauce for Waldo Frank. For Rosenfeld assures us that Frank seeks to "palm off" Rahab upon us as a saint. And it came to pass that the flood gates of Paul Rosenfeld's emotions were let down:

"We have finally to recognize that, despite his boldness of attack, he wants the artist's healthy humility before the materials of his art, wants respect for the identity of the substance before him, and perfect readiness to throw aside all preconceptions for the purpose of approximating more closely the shape of the thing which exists. He will not open himself to objects or feelings sufficiently long, it appears, to give them the opportunity of declaring themselves in all their own fullness. The attitude in which we find him indulging is that of an insolence in the face of life. A look or two has sufficed; he has gotten of them what his purpose required; the door has slammed; and he is imperially prepared to demonstrate with violence that his picture of a feeling, of a man, a woman, the American south or an East Side Block, Spain, Spinoza or the conversational quality of simple people is an accurate one."

Paul Rosenfeld feels imperially prepared to demonstrate that the conversations of Frank's characters are lacking in naturalism. They are. They are lacking in what Frank never tried to give them. Rosenfeld is also imperially prepared to demonstrate — I suppose with violence — that the religious quality he finds in Alfred Stieglitz, Georgia O'eeffe, Sherwood Anderson, Jean Toomer, even in Herbert J. Seligmann, the sense of search for the permanent values in American life, are not to be found in the work of Waldo Frank. Whether this be a sin of omission or commission I am not prepared to demonstrate—imperially or otherwise, but inasmuch as much of this religious quality, this sense of search stems from Frank, it is at least amusing.

But it was one rank vulgarity that sent us away from this paper with a bad taste in our mouths: "The Dark Mother, like Diana of the Ephesians, is full of breasts. But a dissonance is apparent. The Picasso-like effects are inorganic, chiefly; and the breasts remind one not of flowers of flesh but of certain deceptive articles of rubber (or is it cloth?) said to be purchasable at drug stores."

This, it seems to me, is the zenith of unrationalistic criticism. As is the unfair aside at Thomas Craven, whom Paul Rosenfeld likens to Master Sixtus Beckmesser because, forsooth, Craven hesitates to sanctify or to damn on the insubstantial basis of emotionalism.

Paul Rosenfeld knows how to let himself go. He does not know how to check himself. Only the latter virtue pertains to criticism.

EDWIN SEAVER

THE FLOWER OF YOUTH

IMPRESSIONS AND COMMENTS. *Third (And Final) Series.*
By Havelock Ellis. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. \$3.00.

Knowledge has aged him, but wisdom keeps him young. The boy that was once a teacher in the Australian bush, and who later gave up a medical career for a life of multifarious independence, sinks gracefully into the later years which bring for him a decline of the body only and a rare efflorescence of the mind. In a sense, Havelock Ellis has remained the teacher and the physician of society; he has brought it new knowledge and new health. Yet never has the man pronounced a dogma or imposed a prescription. Has any man alive, indeed, asked questions more beautiful and more firmly declined to had down answers vainly definitive? There is nothing in the man's reclusiveness to suggest a romantic withdrawal from life; rather has he penetrated the deeper into it. With Prospero of Hauptmann's "Indipohdi" he might well declare

Leave me to pass my days in solitude
Removed from life, I am to life the nearer.

As for the sterility of the romantic escape, he has written in these "Impressions and Comments" (which are not the last, one will persist in hoping, despite the parenthesis in the sub-title) a stray phrase that is in itself a philosophy. "It is all part of the romantic spirit, which lies in seeking after a beauty the world cannot hold and in failing to see the beauty it really holds."

It is peculiarly appropriate that the man who has written most profoundly and most poetically about the relations of the sexes should also be the author of the famous *Studies In The Psychology Of Sex*. Here is poetry of living founded, not upon a wordy deliquescence that mirrors an irresponsibility of the emotions, but upon the bedrock of vital experience. The scientist, the artist, the poet in Ellis are one; he has an intuition for the interfusion of things. The day-by-day entries of these *Impressions and Comments* touch upon fairly every subject that has filled man's world: birth, death, love, war, art, science, life. No false loyalties fetter his speech; no microcosmic "isms" leash him to a tiny corner of existence. Studying man, loving him, hating him, he at length transcends him.

Ellis is of that rare sort who in their youth suggest age and in their age, the flower of youth. I have been privileged to read, before their publication in book form, the poems that he wrote from his seventeenth to his twenty-fifth year, — poems which, characteristically, he held for four decades before issuing them formally, more to complete a record than to gratify a vanity. They are the very prophecy of his subsequent career, though years of teaching and of medical study were to intervene between these first lines

and the books that won him renown. And today, in *Impressions and Comments*, I find a poetry richer than any in his youthful sonnets; a poetry at once ripe as life in autumn, yet younger than the verses of his spring. It is a poetry that seemingly flits from blackbirds to airships, from sculpture to a philosophy of life as an inextricable intertwining of absurdity and reason, from dreams of fair ladies to cemeteries; yet deep beneath every line is a sense of the essential oneness of existence.

The man is thus, in a sense that has been thrust back into etymology and replaced by a namby-pamby connotation, wholesome: sound, healthy. Just as these fragments of the diary are made into a book not by the covers but by an all-informing vision, so he has seen life steadily and seen the underlying wholesomeness beneath its fragments. He is not to be deceived, as are the eternally juvenile, by the wise gabble about "new" and "old." Life is everlasting flux, not a dictionary.

"Beauty," he writes under January 18, "when the vision is purged to see through the outer vesture, is Truth, and when we can pierce to the deepest core of it is found to be Love. This is a goddess whom I have worshipped sometimes in the unlikeliest places, perhaps even where none else saw her, and she has given wine to my brain, and oil to my heart, and wings to my feet over the stoniest path. No doubt the herd will trample down my shrine some day, yet still worshipping Beauty, even without knowing it.

"But I shall no longer be there."

Fortunately for a world which may or may not appreciate them, his writings, at least, will "be there." And let us hope that this oldster who grows younger with the years, will "be there" for many a fruitful book to come.

ISAAC GOLDBERG

AN ITALIAN REALIST

LITTLE NOVELS OF SICILY, By *Giovanni Verga*, translated
by D. H. Lawrence. New York: Thomas Seltzer.

Giovanni Verga stands in Italian literature as the father of modern realism. If by realism we mean what the generation preceding ours meant by such a word, Verga want not a realist. He did not limit the range of reality only to the tangible and visible world as did Lorenzo Stecchetti, his contemporary, nor did he derive from the French naturalistic movement the method of treating literature from a scientific stand-point, as did Luigi Capuana, another contemporary. By the mere fact that Verga stood aloof from the spirited controversies of his day and shared neither in Stecchetti's nor in Capuana's interpretation of realism, he placed himself above the fleeting events, the fashions, that accompany the appearance of a new direction in the literary life of a country. His isolation, which is that of the truly great, rests on his interpretation of realism. As we can see from his works, he seeks the spiritual reality in his art and does not afford only

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the representation of what is actual and tangible in life. Life appears to him, forged by the gigantic hands of progress, the irresistible urge of which is felt by the whole universe. (See Preface to the *Malavoglia*). This was the luminous synthesis that put an end to the disconsolate pessimism of young Verga, such as he appears to us in *Eros Eva*, *Tigre Reale*, *Storia d'una capinera*, the so-called novels of the first period, that most critics are wont to consider entirely apart from his later works. Verga, in his youth, had not found an harmonious outlook on life. He only saw its conflicting contradictions without seeing between them the unifying force that might give to the toils of men the glory of a deeper life. When in his more mature years, he saw this light fall on history and life, he began again to study the world. Thus the Little Novels of Sicily came to light. From the elegant society of Florence and Milan, he gazed on the primitive world of his native Sicily and he felt all the pathos of the lives of the poor peasants. He presented their griefs, their scanty joys, their faith, their ambitions, their love, their death, thus creating an epic of peasant life. His mind was no longer in the throes of contradictions, hence his serenity which reflects itself also in a style that is taken bodily from the tongue of living people.

A translator of Verga has ahead of him the task of rendering all the epic grandeur which moves behind the every-day events of the common gentry of Sicily. Mr. Lawrence has acquitted himself well of this task. He has rendered the simplicity of Verga's Italian, even in the colloquial phraseology he used, and he allows us to feel the presence of the stirring forces that have made the Little Novels of Sicily a book of life.

DOMENICO VITTORINI

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

ANTHEIL AND THE TREATISE ON HARMONY, by Ezra Pound, Paris: Three Mountains Press. — Both Messrs. Pound and Antheil are too preoccupied baiting the academicians. They run the horrible risk of appearing as the Mencken and Nathan of music. The flippancy of expression in this volume is never clever and it is often more vulgar and far-fetched than anything achieved by the editor of the *American Mercury*. The displeasure induced in the reader by this recklessness of manners becomes all the more acute when it covers a recklessness of thought that has nothing brave or inspired about it, but only the uncompensated quality of insufficient cerebration. For instance, a good many critical judgments are expressed, but very seldom have these judgments been stated in the form of criticism. It is not criticism, one submits, to write "most of Schubert deserves to be played . . . with that art of the 'better' restaurant or 'usual' theatre orchestra," to take an example that, on the face of it, is not irrational. Nevertheless, unless Mr. Pound condescends to write more explicitly, it is fair to contend that the above judgment is meaningless. There is a loose thread of thought in it somewhere; perhaps this specific thread will be found to lead nowhere in particular. Fortunately, Mr. Pound's musical taste stands a severer test than his critical writing on his theories. Neither the treatise on Harmony nor the one on Antheil have much value, primarily because their presentation makes it impossible to appraise the ideas contained in them, but the notes originally published over the name of William Atheling in *The New Age* contain several evidences of a keenly aesthetic musical feeling. The polemics against the piano, scattered throughout the volume, are especially well taken. Would, also, that his interest in pre-Bach music were shared by our concert artists.

JAMES BRANCH CABELL. By Carl Van Doren. New York: Robert McBride Co., \$1.75. — Mr. Van Doren has gone into no deep dissection of Mr. Cabell in his slender, graceful volume. He has acclaimed his contemporary as the best novelist in America and has followed up his assertion by generous quotations from the *Minor Cabell* (earlier works) the *Major Cabell* (revised and more sophisticated books) and *Scholia*, quotations which delight and make you want to read immediately any of Cabell you may have missed, and reread the Cabell you have already enjoyed.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN TIPI TALES, by Hal. G. Borland, Graden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page and Co., \$1.75—Mr. Borland, with a simplicity born not of hollowness but of a richness of experience, reconverts Indian legends into tales for white children and adults. It is the same simplicity one finds in Mr. Borland's direct Plains poems: no detours of comment, no condescension, an immediacy of contact—and, here, a tinge of drollness pervasive rather than obtrusive. The tales are unadorned and unmoralistic; in this Mr. Borland is faithful to their nativity, revealing without footnote the Indian's philosophy and the Indian's poetry. Mr. Borland is that essential middleman who suits a native dish to a more tutored palate without destroying the native flavor.

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THE NATURE, PRACTICE, AND HISTORY OF ART, by Harold Van Buren Magonigle. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.00 — Regretting that the younger generation rises in 'virtual ignorance of art as art', the author entertains a suggestion that he might 'do something about it'! This large commitment suffered an initial limitation to considerations of the fine arts in the West — in a time when the West no longer dominates the horizon of critical and appreciative interest in art, as Mr. Josef Strzygowski, among others, has shown very profoundly. Indeed, how any modern survey of art can be so wanting in world outlook can be comprehensible only in the term of the constriction of interest and outlook that characterizes much of the post-war opinion pronounced from the high places.

WHAT OF IT? By Ring Lardner. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.75. — After reading the newest Lardneriana, we do not feel like saying, "What of It?" Our reaction is rather, "How does he do it?" We cannot understand how, in his own language, he has the nerve to put together a few wisecracks, a few puns, a little good nonsense, and a lot of bad humor, and call it a book. How does he get away with it?

THE PAINTED VEIL, by W. Somerset Maugham. New York: George H. Doran Co., \$2.00. — The Mr. Maugham of "The Moon and Sixpence" and of "Of Human Bondage" is never present in "The Painted Veil." We doubt whether he is even behind it, so melodramatic and sentimental is this story of the eternal triangle which comes as a complete surprise, and an unwelcome one, from one of England's most brilliant men of letters.